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Just Checking
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Norwegian prevails in
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Magnus Carlsen

Retains World Title



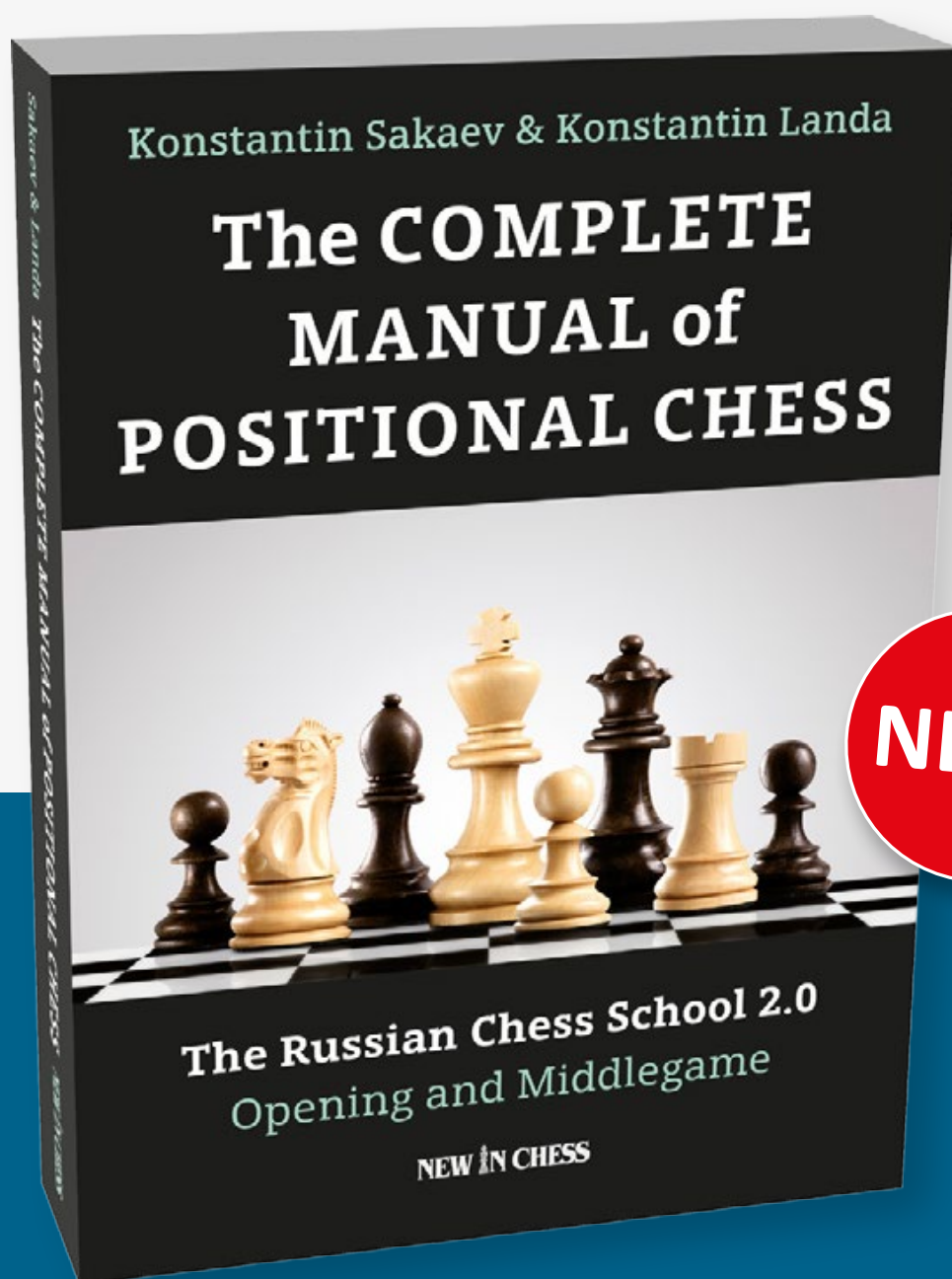
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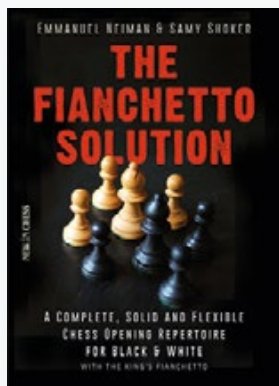
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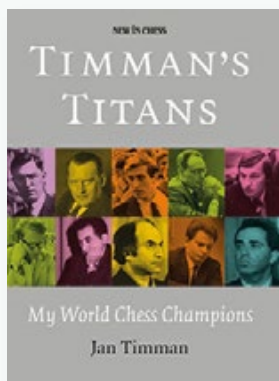
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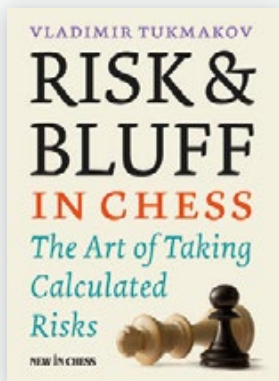
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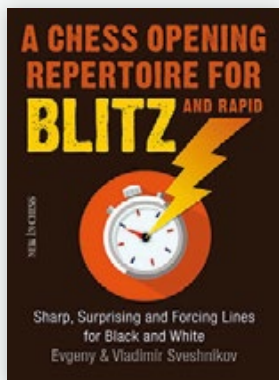
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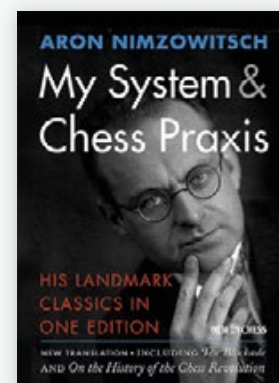
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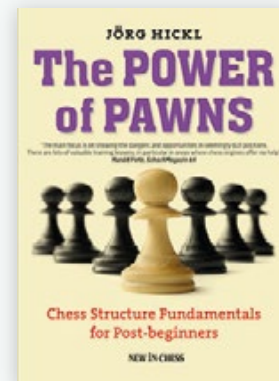
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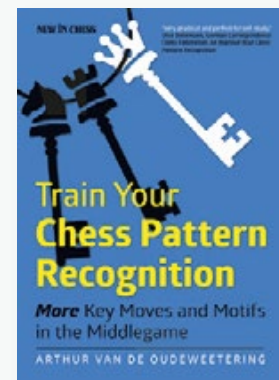
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COVER

Magnus Carlsen: Max Avdeev



'Mark Dvoretsky was the best non-opening coach I have met in my life. The training sessions with Mark, in Moscow in 1995, helped me elevate my understanding of endgames and calculation to a high level. After the training I won the Rubinstein Memorial.' – *Veselin Topalov*

Into the Human Light

We've all heard of the remarkable story of Phiona Mutesi, who through chess rose from one of the worst slums on the planet to inspire the new Hollywood movie *The Queen of Katwe*. But she is just one of many who are being taught to better themselves through chess in one of the most challenging places: a Ugandan shanty town. An intriguing fundraising exhibition that shed a glimpse into this ongoing struggle is *Into the Human Light: Uganda*, by documentary photographer and filmmaker, Dora Leticia Martinez, that ran September 23 - December 5 in the Tournament Room of the Marshall Chess Club in New York City. For Dora, founder of the charity Lens Ethics, photographs tell stories, they document.

And she tells a stunning visual story, as her exhibition brought together more than three years of work (alongside the Smart Girl Chess Program and Sports Outreach charities) in Uganda, where village life can be the hardest of challenges, and necessities we often take for granted such as water, clothing and educational supplies can be scarce. The exhibition photographs show that it really does take a village to raise a child, and the popular community chess lessons being taught on the mud hut floors (as shown in this photograph) can make a big difference. You can help make the difference by visiting www.LensEthics.org and purchasing a print of one of Dora's remarkable photographs from the exhibition, with 50% of sales going to the charities that help to provide chess teaching in the Ugandan villages. ■



DORA L. MARTINEZ, LENS ETHICS



In the dark

As you may have read in our Celeb 64 column in New In Chess 2016/2, R&B legend Ray Charles was a keen chess player. Not mentioned there was that his long-time chess partner was another music legend, Country & Western star Willie Nelson – and one of their surreal chess



Redoubtable Chairmen of the Board:
Ray Charles and Willie Nelson.

moments was turned into a new animated video recently for the Great Big Story video website.

About 30 years ago, Ray and Willie – who topped the C&W charts with their 1984 duet, ‘Seven Spanish Angels’ – were playing a show in Austin, Texas, when the latter visited the former at his hotel suite before going on stage. He found that, not surprisingly for a blind man, Charles kept his rooms unlit and in the dark. But Nelson just sort of rolled with it, being the free-wheeling guy that he is. That’s when – with time to kill before the curtain – Charles brought out his famous braille chess board and challenged Nelson to a game.

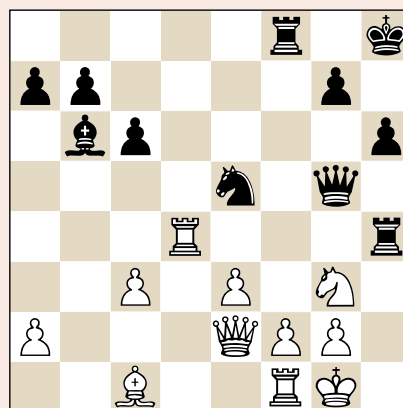
Fair enough, but these were not ordinary chess pieces, as Nelson explains in the animated video: ‘His chess pieces were all the same colour. They were all unpainted wood, you know. But he could feel of ‘em and tell what they were. So, needless to say, he kicked my ass about three games in a row. I said, “Thank you, Ray. Let’s go sing.” But I did tell him that the next time we played, I wanted to do it with the lights on.’

An interesting aside is that, immediately after their chess challenge, both went on stage in front of a live Austin audience to sing ‘Seven Spanish Angels’, which was subsequently released as the video

for their hit. And if you search for it on YouTube, you’ll discover that both are dressed in the same outfits as in the new Great Big Story chess animation. And while you are on YouTube, you’ll also find a live version of the two singing ‘Busted’, where, as the audience applauds, Charles introduces... ‘Willie Nelson, my chess partner!’

Move of the year

As 2016 draws to an end, people are taking stock and looking back. Going over games from the 32nd European Club Cup in the Serbian city of Novi Sad, we came across a game that offers a perfect candidate for the Move of the Year award, if any such thing existed. In a creative effort that started with a Chigorin Defence(!), the ever-inventive Richard Rapport uncorked a stunner that’s destined for the anthologies, and against no less a player than Levon Aronian!



Aronian-Rapport
Novi Sad 2016 (3)
position after 27. Rxd4

27... Rxd4!! This is original thinking at its best. Taking the rook on d4 was los-



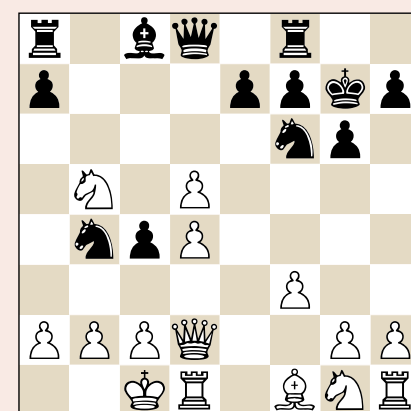
Levon Aronian and Richard Rapport sign the scoresheets of a memorable game.

ing – but by sacrificing a rook, Rapport gains the vital tempo needed to force home the attack. **28. Qxh1** Hopeless is 28. Qxh1 Qf3+ 29. Qxf3 Qxf3 winning. **28... Qxd4 29. f3** The whole point of the rook sacrifice is that if 29. exd4 Qh4+ allows the key tempo-winning move in the first place, and now 30. Qg1 Qg4 wins. **29... Qb6 30. Qe4 Qh5+ 31. Qg1 Qc7 32. Qf2 Qh2 33. Qe1 Qd8! 34. Qd2 Qd3+ 35. Qd1 Qe5** The quick switch of flanks for the queen soon seals the deal, as Rapport moves in for the kill now. **36. g4 Qb5 37. Qg2 Qb2+ 38. Qc2 Qc4 39. Qc1 Qd5 40. g5 Qa5 41. Qd2 Qd3+ 0-1.**

Riding high/shot down

That’s life, as Frank Sinatra once reminded us: You’re riding high one month, shot down the next. The popular hit-song from the Chairman of the Board seems to apply to the recent adventures of Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, the 11-year-old Indian prodigy from Chennai, who is already the youngest ever International Master (see New In Chess 2016/5), and whose next ambition is to break Sergey Karjakin’s long-standing record as the only preteen to gain the Grandmaster title.

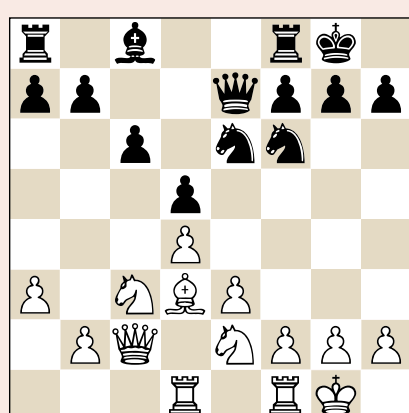
In October, in the final round of the Chess.com Isle of Man Masters, Pragganandhaa was riding high with an energetic and imaginative sacrificial stunner to win in just 18 moves (and with Black!) against GM Axel Bachmann, the experienced Paraguayan with a hefty rating of 2645.



Bachmann-Pragganandhaa
Douglas 2016 (9)
position after 12. Qxb5

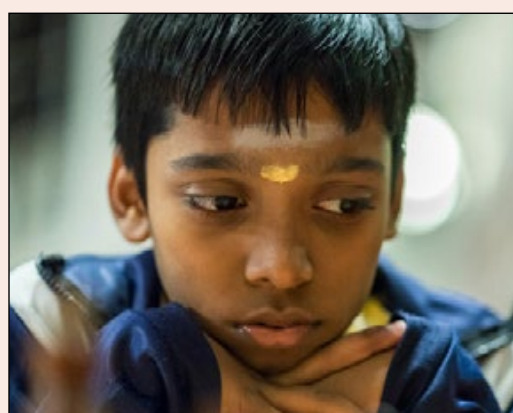
12... ♖xa2+!! 13. ♔b1 ♕xd5! 14. ♖a3?? The lesser evil was 14. ♖c3 ♖xc3+ 15. ♕xc3 ♖a6 16. ♕a3 ♕d6 17. ♕xd6 exd6, but Black's pieces and rooks will soon dominate the board for a big advantage. **14...c3! 15.bxc3 ♖b8+ 16. ♔a1 ♕a5!** Bachmann makes Pragganandhaa's task easier, but full credit to the youngster for finding all the clinically accurate moves to relentlessly pursue the attack on the white king. **17. ♔xa2** There's no time for 17. ♖c4 ♕a4 18. ♖b2 as it fails to 18... ♖xb2! 19. ♔xb2 ♖f5, with an unstoppable mating attack. **17... ♖d5!** The knight hitting c3 with a deadly check will be the decisive, fatal blow. **18. ♖e2 ♖e6** Bachmann resigned, faced with the prospect of being mated.

With that impressive takedown fresh in everyone's mind, Pragganandhaa then headed for the World Cadets Championship in Batumi, Georgia, where he was the top-seed and red-hot favourite to capture gold in the U-12 section. He effortlessly cruised to a perfect start of 8/8 and did indeed look destined for gold – but then he was sensationally shot down in Round 9 by American underdog Nikhil Kumar (rated 400 points lower, and seeded only 25th!), with an equally stunning sacrificial tactical combination.



Kumar-Pragganandhaa
Batumi World U12 2016 (9)
position after 13...0-0

14.f3 c5? This looks good, but the young Indian has overlooked a little something. **15.dxc5 ♕xc5 16. ♖xd5!!** Kumar quickly seizes his moment with a wonderful tactic that must have stunned his oppo-



Boy wonder Pragganandhaa
is learning to give and take.

nent, as it leaves him with a lost game. **16... ♖xd5** The alternative of losing just one pawn is, in many ways, even worse, as Black will be left with shattered kingside pawns: 16... ♕xc2 17. ♖xf6+ gxf6 18. ♖xc2 and White has a big advantage. **17. ♖xh7+! ♔h8 18. ♕xc5 ♖xc5 19. ♖xd5 ♔xh7 20. ♖xc5 b6 21. ♖c2 ♖a6 22. ♖d1 ♖xe2 23. ♖xe2 ♖ac8 24. ♖d7 a5 25. ♖ed2** The dust has cleared, and Kumar is two pawns up and effortlessly converted the win (1-0, 50).

And spurred on by this upset win, rank-outsider Kumar, an eighth grader at Ransom Everglades in Miami, went on to score an undefeated 9½/11 to instead be crowned the U-12 champion, as Pragganandhaa had to settle for returning home with the bronze medal.

The crying game

At least there were no tears involved as the latest crop of chess wunderkinds get younger and younger. But if you want tears and even younger chess players, then no, not a young Bobby Fischer who famously cried after he lost a simultaneous game to Max Pavey, but instead a recent Russian TV feature with the man who succeeded him as World Champion No.12, Anatoly Karpov.

Karpov was invited as a special guest on Maxim Galkin's talented kids show 'The Phenomenon of Success', and he was there as the hosts' ringer for a speed chess challenge against yet another cherubic-faced mini-master: three-year-old(!) Mikhail Osipov (remember that name, folks!). And as Karpov came

on to the amazement and bewilderment of young Misha, there was first an amusing little interlude that involved the show's host:

Galkin: 'Be honest, are you sand-bagging?'

Karpov: 'Me? I would never.'

Galkin: 'No, I'm asking Misha...'

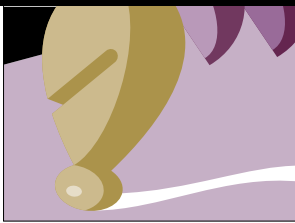
In the game, Misha had 10 minutes to the ex-champion's two minutes and, unbelievably – bearing in mind that he could barely reach over to Karpov's end of the board even kneeling on his chair – he had a very firm knowledge of how to play. Karpov had Black and it was a Nimzo-Indian Defence, and after 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♖b4 4.a3 ♖xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5 6.dxc5 ♖a6 7. ♖g5 ♖xc5 8. ♖f3 b6 9.g3 h6, the old pro went on to gain a big positional advan-



Of course three-year-old Mikhail
Osipov wanted to win.

tage. As the tussle continued under the glare of the enthralled live studio audience, Misha's flag began to hang precariously as well as his position, and he started to panic.

Seeing this, Karpov offered a draw, but it was declined... And then Misha's flag did fall and he accepted his defeat. But overwhelmed by it all, little Misha's eyes began to well up and he sobbed and began to look around for his mother, who was close by in the audience. Karpov then told Misha he was right to not accept the draw out of pity, and he re-told the story of when he learned to play chess at five, he lost to his father and wept, and his father said to the future champion, 'If you cry, I will not play with you.' ■



Your Move

The future of the Olympiad

I enjoyed reading Alejandro Ramirez's recounting of the victory by the United States in Baku (see *New In Chess* 2016/7), the first time this had happened in an Olympiad in which Russia or the Soviet Union competed. Inevitably in such a long article, covering an event in which so much is going on, a few errors are bound to creep in. Here are a few corrections and additions.

The players for the United States are selected by a rating formula incorporating both their FIDE and national rating at the time of invitation and their peak ratings of the previous twelve months. Once the players are selected they vote for the coach and captain they want. The United States Chess Federation has used this system since 1986, and while it might not be the right method for other countries, it has served American chess well.

This was the 12th time I've served as the captain for the United States, and the team has never flown together to an Olympiad and only once held a training camp. Team members spread across the country and busy professional lives make it next to impossible to organize such things. I would imagine this is the case for most countries where the top players don't live in close proximity.

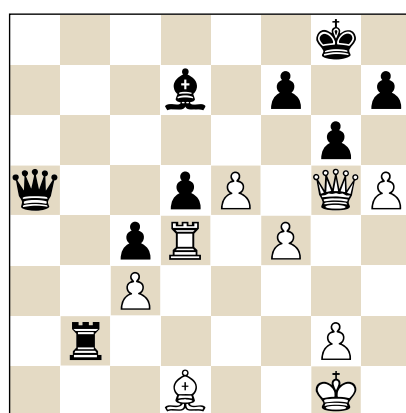
Alejandro writes of Ray Robson: 'In a crucial mistake, he dragged the game on longer than he should have instead of trying to seal a quick draw. Grischuk outplayed the American and won with Black on Board 4. Somewhat understandably, Ray did not play again after this game.'

This comment reflects both the difficulties of reporting on modern Olympiads and playing in team tournaments with match scoring. Unless you are watching an entire match from beginning to end it's difficult to appreciate the dynamics of what is going on. Since any losing score counts for zero points, players have to be ready at all times and adjust what they are aiming for accordingly.

What wasn't mentioned by Alejandro is that in our Round 8 match with Russia, Fabiano Caruana was under a lot of pressure against Sergey Karjakin, enough that Ray felt he needed to keep his game going in case Fabiano lost. Unfortunately, in mutual time pressure Ray neglected to play ♖e5 on move 33 or 34. He didn't play the last three rounds because Sam Shankland won convincingly in Rounds 9 and 10, with big advantages out of the opening in both games

Canadian Board 4 Eric Hansen (ably assisted by his second Christian Chirila) not only showed excellent preparation that extended deep into the middlegame

in his last round win over Shankland, he also nearly ended Ukraine's hope to medal in Round 7. Ukraine avoided back to back defeats by winning the following game.



Eric Hansen – Andrey Volokitin
Baku 2016
position after 35...♔d7

36.♖xd5?? Flashy, but the simple 36.h6 won immediately and 36.♖e7 would have forced Black to sacrifice a piece. Instead, after **36...h6!** Hansen had lost his advantage and Volokitin went on to win a beautiful ending and finished with the best individual result in the Olympiad with a 2992 performance rating! The loss ended up costing

Hansen an individual bronze medal on his board.

37.♖xa5 hxg5 38.♔f3 g4 39.♔d5 g3 40.♖f1 ♔g4 41.♔f3 ♖f2+ 42.♖g1 ♖c2 43.♖a8+ ♖g7 44.♖a1 gxh5 45.♔xg4 hxg4 46.f5 ♖e2 47.e6 fxe6 48.fxe6 ♖f6 49.♖f1 ♖f2+ 50.♖g1 ♖xe6 51.♖e1+ ♖f5 52.♖f1 ♖e4 0-1.

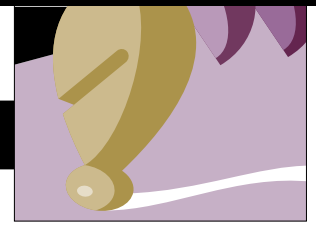
Alejandro, commenting on the tiebreak, writes: 'Slowly, things got worse. John Donaldson was running around with a little notebook but little idea of what was going on.' In fact this was exactly the same situation we had in 2008, where we also tied with Ukraine and it came down to the tiebreak to decide which team would take home the bronze medals. We had a comfortable tiebreak advantage going into the last round and I felt we would likely take gold if we won our match, but I must confess that I had Germany, with a rating advantage of over 200 points per board over Estonia, pencilled in as a win before Round 11 started.

The current tiebreak system – match points of each opponent, excluding the opponent who scored the lowest number of match points, multiplied by the number of game points achieved against this opponent – is not great, but coming up with an alternative is not easy.

One possibility is to make the head-to-head result the first tiebreak. That would have led to Russia taking gold instead of silver in 2012, as they beat Armenia in their individual match, but would not have resolved the other tie for first in 1978, where the Soviet Union and Hungary drew their individual match and had the same number of game points.

The reduced number of rounds (14 in Calvia in 2004, 13 in Turin in 2006 and 11 since 2008), plus the ever increasing number of teams in both sections, coupled with more strong countries, means the margin of error to take first place is getting very small.

The large number of teams competing means it's unlikely the amount of rounds in Olympiads will be increased



in the future. Indeed, the increased cost of hosting the event caused the Baku organizers to eliminate the second free day – something Hikaru and Wesley, who were both sick the last two rounds, did not appreciate. Couple this with an early last round start at 11 a.m. (all previous rounds began at 3 p.m.) plus time to prepare, and it was not surprising there were many exhausted chess players at the closing ceremony.

What to do then? Using match points works very well in smaller team events like the European and World Team Championships, but not so satisfactorily in a huge team event with limited rounds. Accelerated pairings were used in Dresden in 2008, but didn't seem to do more than lead to early rounds being played later (Ukraine-New Zealand in Round 8!).

One thought might be to revert back to game point scoring. With a maximum of four points instead of two available each round this would lead to more separation between teams and would have the added advantage of making it easier for non-medalling winning teams to get a more accurate idea of their final placing. As it is now it is not uncommon for the top ranked team in a point group to have a rating performance a hundred points higher than the lowest ranked team in the group immediately above it.

Note that switching back to game points has two potential negatives. First the drama of the match point scoring system is lost, as a win by 2½ -1½ no longer means 2 for the winner and 0 for the loser. Second, a rigged result has a much bigger impact, particularly in the last round, as a large score could propel the winner ahead of many teams. This allegedly happened in an Olympiad in the early 2000s and is said by some to be the impetus for the current system.

On a last note I would like to congratulate the Ukrainian team, which won an Olympiad record ten matches, the most ever since the implementation of match scoring. Only Russia has won more Olympiad team medals since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Olek-

sandr Sulypa and Vladimir Tukmakov deserve great credit for their successful captaining of the Ukrainian teams during this successful run.

In the 13 Olympiads held between 1992-2016, four countries have won 29 of the 39 medals.

Russia 11 medals (6 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze) – note Russia won two medals in 1994 when its B team took bronze.

Ukraine 7 medals (2 gold, 2 silver, 3 bronze)

Armenia 6 medals (3 gold, 3 bronze) – note: did not play in 2016

United States 5 medals (1 gold, 1 silver, 3 bronze)

China 2 medals (1 gold, 1 silver)

Hungary 2 medals (2 silver)

Israel 2 medals (1 silver, 1 bronze)

Bosnia and Hercegovina (1 silver)

Germany 1 medal (1 silver)

Uzbekistan 1 medal (1 silver)

India 1 medal (bronze)

John Donaldson, captain Team USA
Berkeley, CA, USA

Vanished ECO codes

At one point you decided to add the ECO codes to the headings of the games you publish in your magazine and year-books. A great idea as the earlier system (SI 23.5 ... whatever) is for some reason not as good.

With great anticipation I opened the latest copy of my beloved New In Chess (issue 2016/7) to find ... they're gone! No ECO codes to be seen! ??

Although I can see that naming the opening with its 'human name' has its merits for the (few) coffee house and novice chess players that read your magazine, for most of the stronger club players, like myself up to the professional chess players, which will be, might I add, the majority of your subscribers, having the commonly used ECO codes like B33 (Sicilian Sveshnikov) or C89 (Spanish Marshall Attack) and so on, makes life so much easier.

One uses your magazine, among other things, as a reference. One adds a note or remark to one's documentation used when preparing for a game. 'Ah there was an analysis in NIC 2016/6 on ...'

Why on earth did you decide to remove them?

May I timidly ask you to put them back where they belong!

Gordon C. Fowler
Mönchengladbach, Germany

Editorial postscript:

Although we have many (very) strong chess players among our readers, the majority of our readership consists of club players of varying strength. As clarity and accessibility are major concerns for the editorial staff, we decided to replace the ECO code by the actual names of the openings. Of course, we realized that stronger players might miss them, but believed that most of these readers would also use databases and have the opportunity to include the reference to a specific issue of New In Chess there.

At our website (newinchess.com/magazine) we do publish a download of the pgn's of the games in each magazine, including the ECO-code (but not including the annotations to the games). ■

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Europe: The Undisputed King of Chess

Chess is a global game and its popularity is growing, but its heart remains in Europe, sustained by a large community of passionate hobbyists. Of the more than 180,000 players globally who are rated by the World Chess Federation between 1200 and 2000 – roughly the levels of dedicated, albeit non-professional club players – almost 100,000, or more than half, are in Europe.

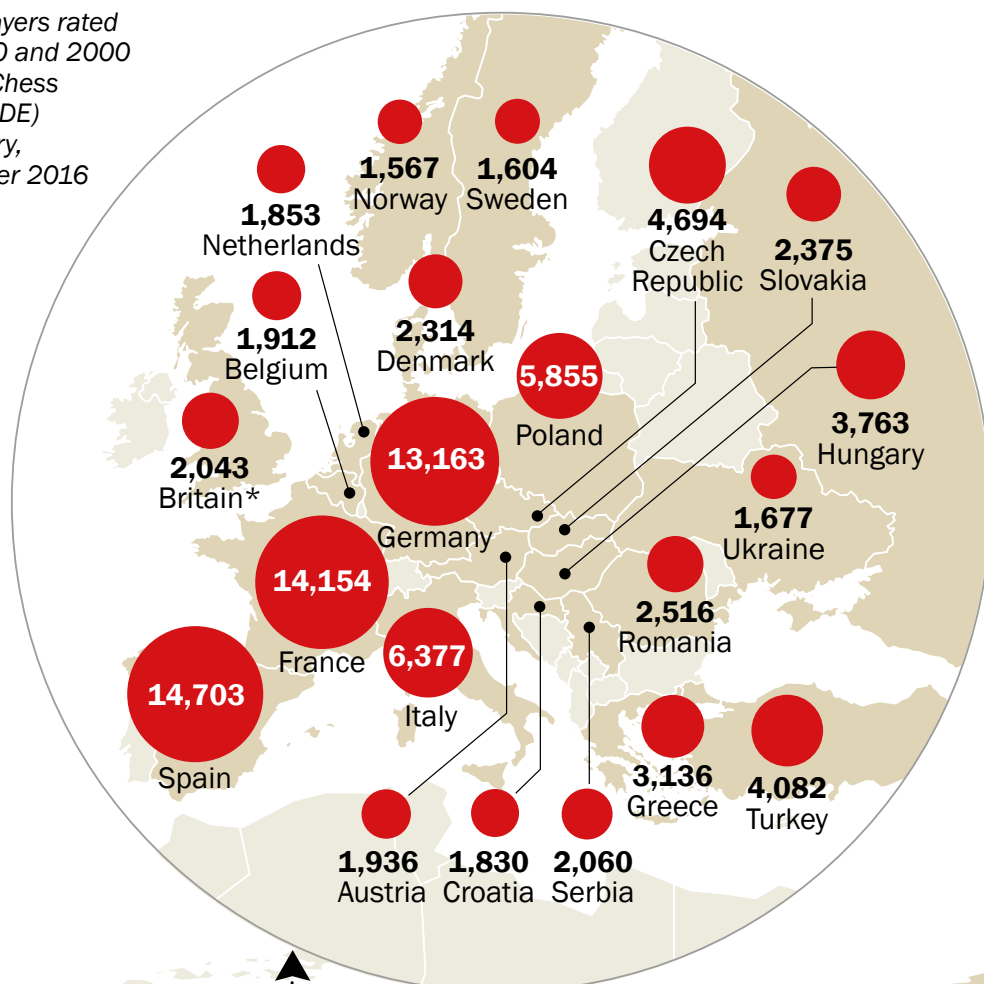
Love of the game as well as historical and cultural traditions undoubtedly contribute to the reasons that chess is so popular in Europe. Establishing a foundation for chess to take hold in other

countries is not easy. It has happened in India, which has the second-largest pool of club-level players with 15,883, inspired by the success of Viswanathan Anand, the former World Champion. By contrast, neighbouring Bangladesh has 790 club players and Pakistan has only 38.

Following the model of Anand, perhaps the United States might have had a more robust chess population if Bobby Fischer had not quit the game so soon after winning the title in 1972.

DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN

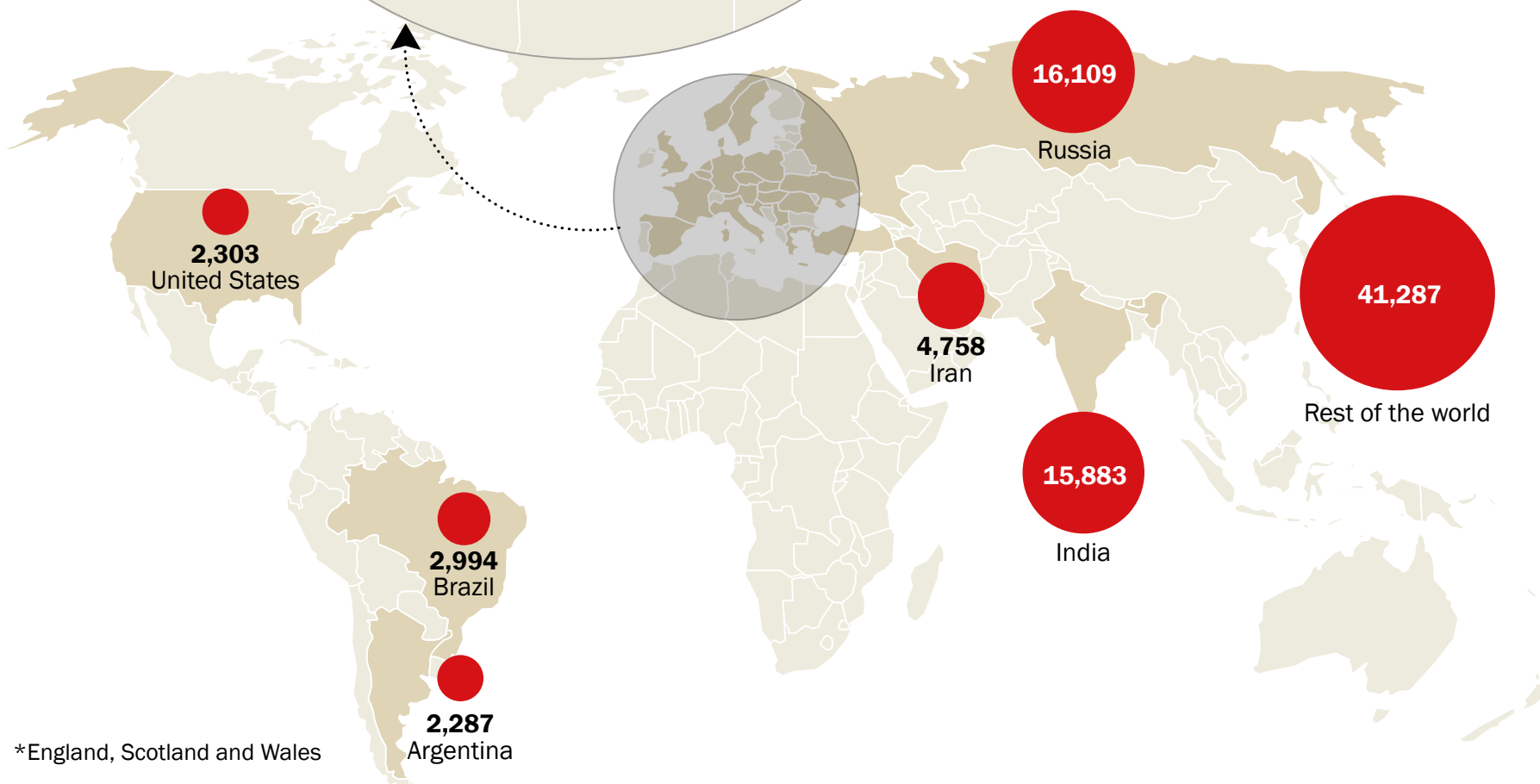
Number of players rated between 1200 and 2000 by the World Chess Federation (FIDE) in each country, as of November 2016



A match from the German Bundesliga



The annual Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee, the Netherlands



*England, Scotland and Wales

Fair & Square



Nana Mouskouri:

‘You should have seen Leonard and Bob together! Neither of them is

what you would call a talker, so when they had a

conversation it was like watching a game of chess. Everything happened very slowly and each word had so much meaning.’

(The Greek singer, in tribute to Leonard Cohen, describing how she witnessed a conversation between him and Bob Dylan in LA in 1974)

Maurice Ashley: ‘Chess is a brutal game. In Brooklyn, we play chess in the parks with music blaring and everyone talking trash. If you get your feelings hurt, play better chess!’



Derek Carr: ‘It’s a big chess game. It really is. You just go out there, you know your rules, you know what the

coaches are telling you and you just try and perform to what your coaches are telling you to be the best of your abilities.’

(The Oakland Raiders star quarterback, ahead of his team’s season opener against New Orleans)



Emo Phillips: ‘A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing.’

(The US comedian who also said: ‘I like to play chess with bald men in the park, although it’s hard to find 32 of them’)

Albert Einstein: ‘I always disliked the fierce competitive spirit embodied in chess.’

Nigel Short: ‘If chess is a vast jungle, computers are the chainsaws in a giant environmentally insensitive logging company.’

Garry Kasparov: ‘Trump was crushed in the debate like a painful chess loss that effects your concentration for days. But obsessing on a defeat leads to more.’

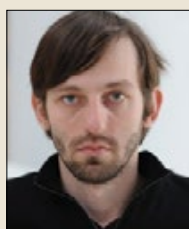


David Levy: ‘I prefer to lose a really good game than to win a bad one.’

(The Scottish IM, author and computer chess expert)

Yasser Seirawan: ‘How come the little things bother you when you are in a bad position? They don’t bother you in good positions.’

Viktor Kortchnoi: ‘The human element, the human flaw and the human nobility – those are the reasons that chess matches are won or lost.’



Alexander Grischuk: ‘The question has to be put differently: will humanity survive the 21st century? If yes – yes.’

(When asked recently in an interview if chess will survive the 21st century)

Aron Nimzowitsch: ‘Ridicule can do much, for instance embitter the existence of young talents.’



George Steiner:

‘Chess may be the deepest, least exhaustible of pastimes, but it is nothing more. As

for a chess genius, he is a human being who focuses vast, little-understood mental gifts and labours on an ultimately trivial human enterprise.’



Vladimir Putin:

‘Chess makes man wiser and clear-sighted.’

Stephen Fry: ‘There are, as chess players and George Steiner are fond of remarking, more possible positions in chess than there are atoms in the universe. The chances of dropping a tray full of ball-bearings on the floor and their falling in such a way as to spell the phrase “Little Scrotely welcomes careful drivers” are greater by far than those of two identical chess games ever being played.’
(From Fry’s collection of magazine articles, published in his book ‘Paperweight’)



Pierre Mac Orlan:

‘There are more adventures on a chessboard than on all the seas of the world.’

(The French novelist and songwriter)

IM Elliott Winslow: ‘There should be as many world champions as there are players, because every chess player lives in his own world.’



FIDE World Chess
Championship Match
2016

World Champion
fends off
Sergey Karjakin's
challenge in
New York

Magnus Carlsen Strikes in Extra Time

For most people he was the odds-on favourite, but at the end of a tense tussle full of nerve-wracking twists and turns, Magnus Carlsen needed tiebreak games to break Sergey Karjakin's resistance.

The Norwegian called it his toughest World Championship test to date and admitted that after his sensational loss in Game 8 he had been in a dark place. His resurrection was no less dramatic, but once he was back in the match, the World Champion showed his class and retained his title thanks to a clever ploy at the end of the classical games. **DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM** reports from New York.



Karjakin said that he had not been able to play the chess that he had prepared, because Carlsen had cleverly steered him away from the battlegrounds he had been hoping for.

While I was still at home, I had a Skype chat with Vladimir Kramnik about the match in New York. The former World Champion was not too impressed by the play he had seen in the early games and matter-of-factly noted that he thought that 'slowly but surely the match was going to end in Karjakin's favour.' And when I didn't come up with an immediate answer, he added prophetically, 'Once it concludes, remember my words.'

Mind you, this was after only two games in which not too much had happened; two rather uneventful draws, not the protracted fights in Games 3 and 4 in which Magnus Carlsen first failed to exploit his winning chances and then was unable to convert a clearly winning advantage, as Sergey Karjakin gave him a taste of his defensive skills and trademark tenacity.

As the match developed, I thought about Kramnik's words a lot and wondered if Karjakin was perhaps following a strategy inspired by the way his compatriot had wrenched the crown from Garry Kasparov 16 years ago. In that match in London, Kramnik put not losing first, and his weapon to prevent losing as Black was the Berlin Wall that his opponent continued to storm in vain. Two wins with White decided the issue.

Wasn't this what Karjakin was doing, too? Seeing the match as a whole and not caring too much about what happened in the individual games, as long as he didn't lose? At some point, his opponent would go astray and one win could essentially be enough to become World Champion. It was an attractive theory, especially when the initiative shifted to Karjakin. In Game 5, playing as Black, he missed a good chance to let his opponent sweat and in Game 7, Carlsen could be happy

that a slip in the opening only led to an endgame a pawn down and with the opposite-coloured bishops guaranteeing a draw.

But it was also a theory that Karjakin dispelled after the match when he said that he had not been able to play the chess that he had prepared, because Carlsen had cleverly steered him away from the battlegrounds he had been hoping for.

The World Champion must also have felt that he was calling the shots, because after seven draws he could no longer contain his impatience. Confidently taking risks he went looking for his first victory, and unable to contain his ambition he overstepped the mark and was punished brilliantly by Karjakin.

Raised eyebrows

The Challenger was leading, and everyone quickly forgot about

the draws many people had been whining about only a day ago. And you felt there was a shift in the spectators' sympathy. More and more neutral fans began to express their support for the underdog, both for his modesty at the press conferences and his grittiness at the board.

At the same time, Carlsen's behaviour raised quite a few eyebrows when he could not control himself after the loss in Game 8. First he declined to answer the habitual short questions on leaving the playing room and then he didn't know what to do with himself as he sat waiting for the press conference to begin. When Karjakin had not turned up after two minutes, Carlsen made a few frustrated gestures and stomped off.

This was an expensive breach of contract, as the organizers informed him that he would be fined and that 10 per cent of his prize-money would be withheld. He appealed, but his appeal was rejected, although FIDE and AGON showed some clemency when they reduced the fine to 5 per cent, which is still 27,500 dollar. They explained the reduction by pointing out that this was only the first time that Carlsen had declined to attend a press conference and that his behaviour was more an expression of frustration than the desire to insult anyone.

New York

As the match entered its decisive phase and the tension rose, the spectator and VIP areas at the Fulton Market Building were increasingly filled by Norwegian and Russian chess fans; visitors from afar, who had gathered on neutral ground in New York to root for their favourites. There were many American visitors, too, of course, but they didn't turn out in numbers that made one think that this match was a big boost for American chess.

AGON had been keen right from the start to have the match in New York and even went as far as to

'FIDE and AGON showed some clemency when they reduced the fine to 5 per cent, which is still 27,500 dollar.'

announce this more than a year ago, when they did not even have a venue or a sponsor yet. Many months of uncertainty followed, as well as understandable speculation that it was totally unclear where the match would be held and if there would be a match at all.

In the end, the venue was only announced in early August, and the main sponsor, Phosagro, a Russian company producing fertilizers, at the end of that month. Given Magnus Carlsen's good connections with some of the rich and famous in the United States, many chess lovers had counted on American corpo-

rate sponsorship, but ultimately it was Russian money that saved the match. When he appeared in the studio during Game 2, the CEO of Phosagro, Andrey Guryev, explained that Russians had chess in their DNA and referred to a conversation with Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who had asked for his help. Of course, as a chess lover, he had obliged.

That was remarkable and evoked memories of the last FIDE General Assembly in Baku, where FIDE Deputy President Georgios Makropoulos spoke to the delegates about the financial concerns of FIDE and that these days they could no longer 'ask Kirsan to make a phone call and find money for an event'. There was no reason to doubt his words, as Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's travel expenses, which he used to pay for himself, have left FIDE with painful financial worries. But apparently he still could make such a call, which



suggests that there was a clear wish in the Russian government to let the match take place.

The match was saved, but it also meant that the players competed for the statutory minimum prize-fund of one million euros, the lowest World Championship match prize-fund in many years. Sixty per cent for the winner, forty for the loser, an allocation that would be changed to 55-45 when the score was tied after 12 games.

Given his efforts to save the match, it was painful for Ilyumzhinov that he could not attend the match himself. The US authorities suspect him of dealings with Syrian president Assad and have put him on a blacklist. Ilyumzhinov vehemently contests the allegations and kept hoping to be granted a visa, but halfway through the match it became clear that the American Embassy in Moscow would not issue the desired document.

Ilyumzhinov's visa problems did not stop him from promoting the match in his own manner. On the eve of the match, he stated that he had invited both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump to drop by and after the elections he claimed that Trump would be at the closing ceremony.

They were not the only ones not to show up. Another notable absentee was Garry Kasparov, who lives in New York, but for well-known reasons doesn't want to have anything to do with AGON and FIDE.

Tickets

While the Russians provided the money for the match, the Norwegians inspired the official broadcast. Chess on television has become incredibly popular in Norway, thanks to the formats that were developed to



Magnus Carlsen admitted this was the toughest of the three matches he has won so far.

appeal to a general audience. This time, too, several hundreds of thousands of Norwegians stayed up till deep in the night to follow the games in New York. On the final day, NRK even moved the broadcast to their first channel, which means that at least 800,000 people were watching.

For the international Internet broadcast from New York, AGON had enlisted an NRK producer to advise them, and in the studio two other Norwegians, Knut Skeie Solberg and Kaja Snare, together with expert Judit Polgar, presented a lively and entertaining show. It was a pity that for many chess fans the quite reasonable fee of \$15 for the entire event (at the end even reduced to \$7) proved an insurmountable obstacle. How many people subscribed is hard to say, but on the final day only 10,000 people watched the official live broadcast.

The fee for the broadcast, which in fact was the best way to follow the action, was low compared to the entrance tickets at the Fulton Mar-

ket Building. A one-day ticket was \$75 and for the final game you were expected to fork out \$200. A ticket to the VIP-room, including free drinks and snacks, was \$600. On the first day, when everything was not yet going as planned, an elderly couple bought VIP tickets, only to leave after half an hour because they didn't feel they were treated like VIPs at all.

For New Yorkers, used to Broadway tickets, \$75 may not be extravagant, but many of them must also have felt disappointed about what they got in return. To begin with, they could only really see the players at the press conference after the games. During the games, they could only watch them, rather vaguely, from a dark room through dark soundproof glass or on screens, while trying to listen to the commentary that was mostly drowned out by the noise of visitors discussing the games or playing chess themselves.

In general, there were few facilities for spectators and one could easily get

New York 2016

New York 2010																	tiebreak (25 min + 10 sec)						
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					1	2	3	4
Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2853	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	1	½	½	6	2772	½	½	1	1	3	
Sergey Kariakin	IGM	RUS	2772	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	0	½	½	6	2853	½	½	0	0	1	



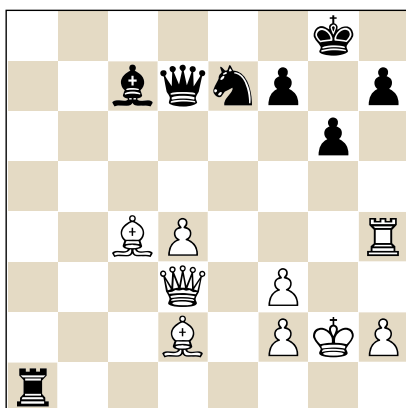
NEW IN CHESS

The spectators' entrance of the Fulton Market Building, the venue of the World Championship match in New York's Seaport District in Lower Manhattan.

the impression that one had walked into a studio to watch the recording of a television show from the side-lines.

Missed opportunity

Still, the café was a nice place to be, especially as the tension mounted after Karjakin's win in Game 8. Game 9 was another scare for the Norwegian. After a long fight Carlsen escaped with a draw in 74 moves, but he might have been in serious trouble if Karjakin had grabbed an opportunity shortly before the first time-control.



Karjakin-Carlsen
New York 2016 (9)
position after 38...♘e7

39. ♕xf7+

This looks very strong, but White will find it difficult to turn his advantage into something substantial and the World Champion managed to save the draw quite comfortably. More dangerous was 39. ♖b3! ♘f5

(after 39...♖f5 40. ♗e4 ♕d6 41. ♖b7 ♗a3 42. ♕f4 ♕xf4 43. ♗xe7 Black's position collapses) and only now 40. ♕xf7+ ♖g7 41. ♗h3 ♖e7 42. ♕g8 (a very nice move) 42...h5 43.d5, and although Carlsen said that he believed that he would have good drawing chances, White's winning chances looked considerably better.

The second turning point came in Game 10, a game that Karjakin will remember for many years, because at some point he could force a perpetual and didn't see it. His fans can only speculate what would have happened if the Russian had hung on to his lead. Instead, Carlsen put him under pressure and fought himself back into the match.

Immediately after the match Karjakin refused to call Carlsen lucky, as the Norwegian could also have won Games 3 and 4, but it was still painful. For the World Champion it was like breaking free from a dark prison cell and seeing the clear blue sky again. He admitted that he had been in 'a dark place' and quoted the sports cliché that you have to focus on the process and not on the result. But that had been difficult after Game 8.

Now things were different, and in Game 11, the champion very comfortably drew with black. As his father Henrik put it, 'I feel that he has his grip on the game back.'

Food for thought

Anticipation for Game 12 was high. Surely Carlsen would press and test Karjakin to the limit. Could you blame the organizers for increasing the price of a ticket to \$200 a game that might decide the World Championship? Before anyone could give an answer to that question, Carlsen had steered the game to a quick and insipid draw, leaving everyone guessing why he had let Karjakin off the hook so easily.

The answer, which made a lot of sense, was provided after he had triumphed in the tiebreak games. This had been his plan all along and it had given him a real free day without any preparation while getting ready for the tiebreak games: 'I felt it was an advantage that I didn't have to think so much about Game 12 as he did.'

It worked. Not only did Carlsen arrive well rested, but his opponent had also made an additional misjudgement that helped tip the scales. Before the rapid games he had frantically been repeating his openings. As Karjakin said: 'It would have been better to come with a clear head. That was my mistake.'

The first tiebreak game still was a normal draw, and then Karjakin showed his wizardry in a truly epic defence, but in the third game he cracked. The details you will find in Anish Giri's illuminating notes to the tiebreak games, which follow his inimitable analysis of the key games of the match.

Magnus Carlsen called it the toughest of the three matches he has won so far. At the final press conference, a Norwegian journalist asked him how many more years he expected to be World Champion, clearly alluding to an earlier boast that he hoped to keep the title for 20 years. This time Carlsen was more cautious and said that in any case he'd be champion for the next two years. There can be no doubt that his ambitions reach further, but it was evident that the struggle with Sergey Karjakin had given him something to think about. ■



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
New York 2016 (4)
Ruy Lopez, Anti-Marshall

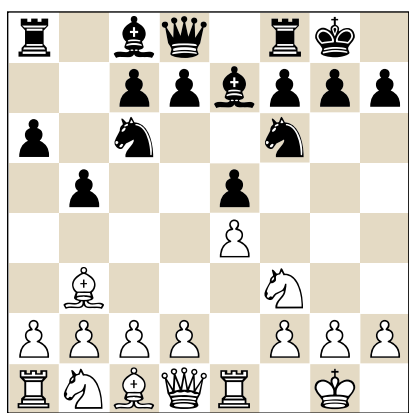
1.e4

For the second time in the match Sergey decides to stay faithful to his life-long weapon. Lately the challenger had started to vary his opening approach, but for a match against the current World Champion it made a lot of sense to go back to the roots (1.e4) and in the most principled way possible. Later on in the match, when he ran out of ammunition with 1.e4, Sergey started showing more flexibility.

1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7

No surprises from Magnus so far either; the traditional Spanish is being repeated. Playing Karjakin's favourite Berlin Wall would be too risky, while there are only so many solid openings one can choose from against 1.e4. When the stakes are this high, even our extravagant Champ likes to keep it solid.

6.♞e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0



An invitation to the Marshall. On the one hand, this doesn't surprise, on the other I don't think memorizing all the lines in the sharp variations of the Marshall itself is something that fits into Magnus's life philosophy. The reason he still sticks to allowing the Marshall these days, I believe, is that nobody goes into the

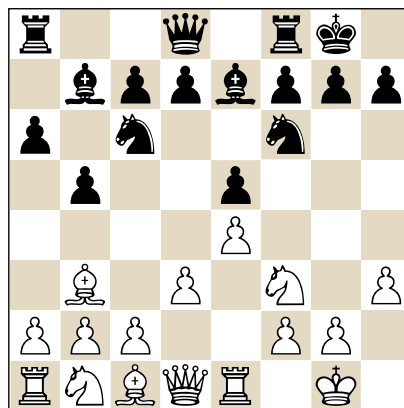
old lines where Black actually has to play a pawn down and know what he is doing.

8.h3

Some years back, this line was popular and I myself tried it with White on one occasion. After Ivanchuk's painful loss with White against So in Wijk aan Zee 2015, where Ivanchuk wasn't aware of my recommendation (which was published in New In Chess, issue 2014/3, and because of Ivanchuk's loss also in issue 2015/2), the line went out of fashion. This was obviously not the fault of the variation, and Sergey, who probably read all my articles and felt prepared, decided to just go for it.

8.c3 d5 is the Marshall, the rest is Anti-Marshall.

8...♙b7 9.d3



9...d6

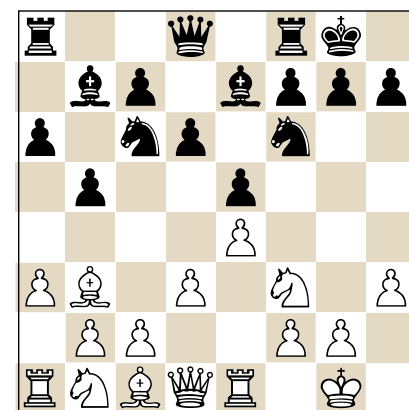
The old, traditional line, and not much can be wrong with it.

9...d5 is the trendy, Marshallly way, but as I said, I don't think Magnus actually likes things Marshallly and prefers to stick to manoeuvring. On the few occasions when he faced this variation, he never went for 9...d5.

Having said that, for his next game with the black pieces, Magnus pulled himself together, memorized a few forcing variations after 9...d5, and drew effortlessly.

10.a3

The traditional a3 variation. The modern variant on the same theme was tried by Sergey in his first white game, but Magnus was well prepared and easily neutralized the challenger's attempts.



10...♞d7 10...♞b8, in Breyer style, was played by Magnus in his most recent (rapid) game in this variation. He made an interesting pawn sacrifice and went on to beat Zhigalko nicely, but I am sure Team Sergey had done their homework here.

That game went 11.♞bd2 ♞bd7 12.♞f1 ♞e8 13.♞g3 ♙f8 14.♞g5!? d5! 15.exd5 ♞c5 16.c4! ♞xb3 17.♞xb3 c6! 18.dxc6 ♙xc6 19.cxb5 ♙d5! 20.♞d1 axb5, and Black had obvious compensation, but there was no need to panic yet (Zhigalko-Carlsen, World Rapid Berlin 2015, 0-1, 44).

11.♞bd2 11.♞c3 is another route for the knight. Often the knight goes to g3 anyway, via e2, not f1.

11...♞fe8 12.c3!?

A rare move, but with a very clear logic behind it. White prevents the standard ...♞d8-e6 manoeuvre, which is pretty much the point of the ...♞d7 variation.

12.♞f1 ♞d8 is a major theoretical ground. White usually proceeds with ♞g3 and c3, Black with ...♞e6 and ...c5. Everyone is happy.

12...♙f8 It makes sense to aim for some kind of Zaitsev set-up.

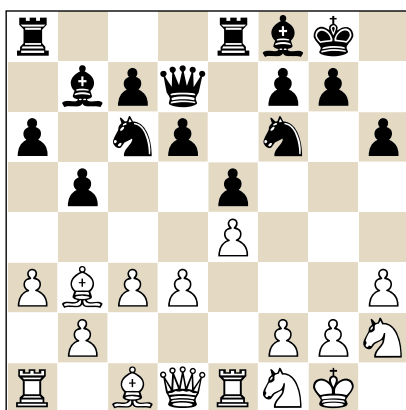
12...♞d8 is now well and solidly met by 13.d4!.

12...d5 13.exd5 ♞xd5 14.♞e4 looks like a good version of a position that could arise in the 9...d5 variation.

13.♞f1 h6 14.♞3h2?!

Apparently a little premature, though for a while I was impressed with this. The idea is quite typical.

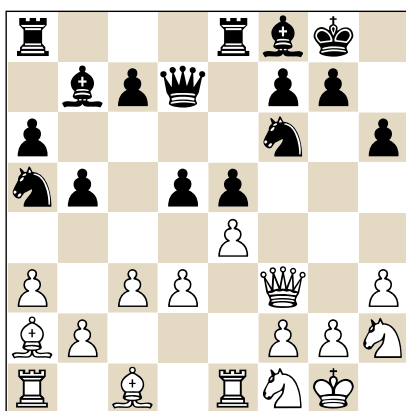
The standard and non-committal 14.♞g3 is easy to advise in hindsight, after it turned out that Black has a very strong sequence against what Karjakin tried in the game.

**14...d5!**

The normal and typical reaction. Black needs to strike in the centre to get some counterplay against White's potential kingside initiative.

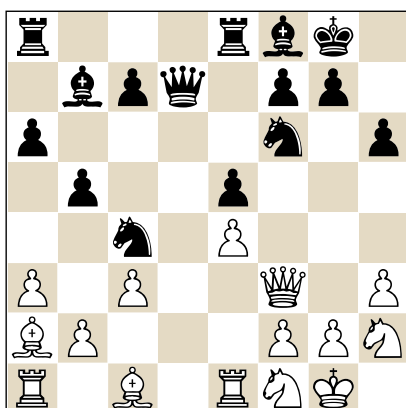
15. ♖f3

15. ♖g4, followed by a queen trade, is not the point of White's previous move, and it is not possible to cause Black any problems in such fashion.

15... ♘a5 16. ♕a2

16...dxe4 I expected the game to develop in the following crazy fashion: 16...c5!? 17. ♕xh6 c4, with a mess, but what Magnus does is a lot more clear-cut and is simply good.

17.dxe4 ♘c4! If Black were to defend against the threat of ♕xh6, White's play would be justified, but Magnus found a very elegant follow-up.



18. ♕xh6?! The move is not even all that bad, but because Sergey had missed Magnus's strong response, it deserves a 'dubious' mark from your meticulous annotator.

18. ♖g4 doesn't lead to much either, especially after the nice regroupment 18... ♖xg4 19. hxc4 ♕c8! 20. ♖e3 ♖c6!, followed by ... ♕e6!.

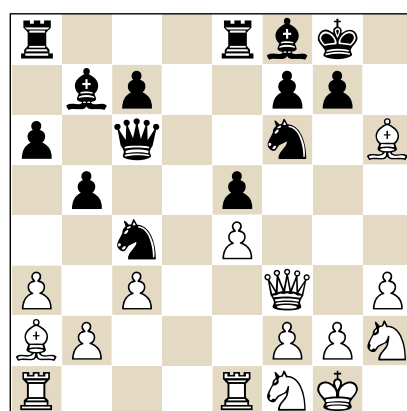
18. ♖g3 is flexible, not really principled, but decent. And from a practical point of view probably the best way to play. Black will defend against ♕xh6, but White can continue moving around without disturbing the equilibrium with a4, ♖hf1-♖e3 etc.

18... ♖c6! Ouch. Now I realized that our Norwegian hero is not getting mated. What's more, he is taking over, so with a clear conscience I left

'I noticed that offering trades that increase his advantage is one of Magnus' trademarks.'

to sleep. It was about midnight at my end and I knew I would most likely get woken up later in the night by the hungry outcry of a family member (when I might have a peek to see the result of the game).

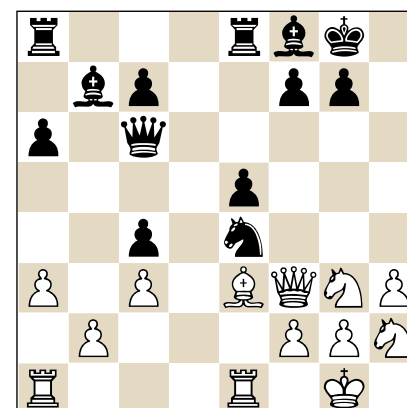
18... ♕xe4 was what Sergey was hoping for, when indeed White's position looks too beautiful to be true: 19. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 20. ♖xe4 gxf6 21. ♖g4 ♕g7 22. ♖fe3, and those light squares are worth more than just an exchange.

**19. ♖xc4?**

Things started looking bad for White, but not so bad that this move had to be played. Everyone was shocked to see it and the only explanation as to why Sergey had played it, is that it is often hard to choose between two ugly options, two evils. Still, a player of Sergey's class and understanding would normally judge that this desperate and anti-positional move is worse than any alternative.

Best was 19. ♕c1, when Black goes 19... ♖xe4. Now Sergey was afraid of ... ♖c5, but White has a nice move to prevent it: 20. ♖e3!. Already when I was about to fall asleep, I saw my phone assessing this position as absolutely equal. But even though I have an iPhone 6s with the ultra-fast quad-chip A9 processor – four times

faster, by the way, than the one in the iPhone 6 – I correctly judged that the position was already better for Black and I am glad to see my computer confirming this assessment. Still, the position is far less clear and categorical than in the game: 20... ♖ad8! 21. ♖hg4 g6 22. ♖xc4 (22. ♕b1 ♖a5) 22... bxc4, and just to see how things develop I decided to continue the line: 23. ♖e2 ♖c5! 24. ♕xc4 e4, and with ... ♖d3 coming, Black has more than enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

19... bxc4 20. ♕e3 ♖xe4 21. ♖g3

Now Black has an overwhelming position. He has a better pawn-structure on both flanks, the b2-pawn is weak and backward, the d3-square is eternally weak, the e5-pawn ensures Black's superiority in the centre, the bishop pair is in Black's hands as well, the white knights have no outposts, there are no promising pawn breaks; all in all, nobody knows why people voted for Donald Trump.

21...♘d6

As in every position with a large positional advantage, there are alternatives on every move. I think Magnus did a reasonable job of nursing his advantage and instead of looking at the alternative I considered, we'll just look at the way he handled it.

22.♖ad1 ♖ab8

Placing the rook on the half-open file to put pressure on the b2-pawn.

23.♙c1 f6

Strengthening the centre.

24.♞xc6

White had run out of useful moves and the queen trade was inevitable anyway.

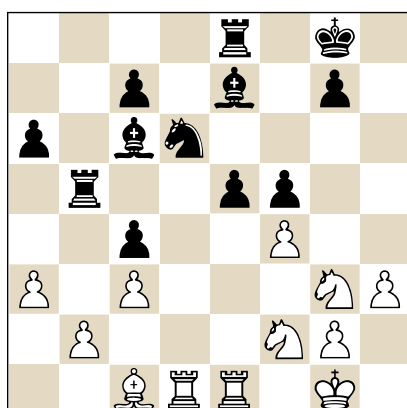
24...♙xc6 25.♘g4 ♖b5

Preparing ...f5, and the subsequent expansion in the centre.

26.f3 f5 27.♘f2 ♙e7!?

Activating the bishop efficiently.

28.f4



28...♙h4!

Allowing lots of exchanges, but I noticed that offering trades that increase his advantage is one of Magnus' trademarks. The quality of a good positional player – Capablanca, Rubinstein, these kinds of guys.

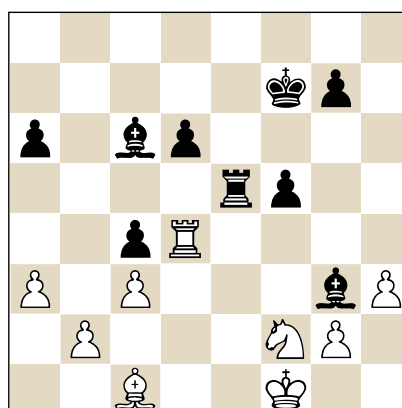
29.fxe5 ♙xg3 30.exd6 ♖xe1+



OLE KRISTIAN STRØM

Magnus Carlsen seems to be enjoying his own little slice of heaven as he arrives at the Fulton Market Building with his second Peter Heine Nielsen and his father Henrik.

**31.♖xe1 cxd6 32.♖d1 ♙f7
33.♖d4 ♖e5 34.♙f1**



34...♖d5!?

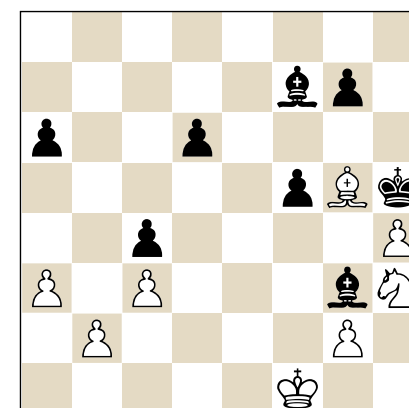
Offering a rook trade, which on the one hand increases the drawish tendencies, but on the other gives Black an absolutely easy life. Probably good judgement by Magnus here.

35.♖xd5 ♙xd5 36.♙g5 ♙g6

37.h4? Seeing that ...♙h5 and ...g5 are going to come, Sergey decided to try to give up a pawn in order to set up a blockade on the dark squares. It doesn't work, and later Sergey changed his mind. I don't know if White can hold with passive play here. Probably not, but if anyone

could, it would be our challenger. Both 37.♙d8 ♙f4 and 37.♙d2 ♙h5 are good for Black.

37...♙h5 38.♘h3 ♙f7

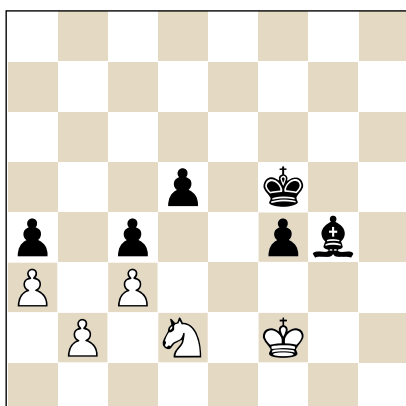


39.♙e7!

Jumping off the train that is about to crash. Too late, but it worked!

The alternative 39.♘f4+ ♙g4 40.♘e2 ♙xh4 41.♙xh4 ♙xh4 is probably a good idea to get to the core of this endgame. So let's have a deeper look into this, even though the editor probably would have preferred to save an extra page in the magazine for Nigel and his 'Short Scandals' column: 42.♙f2 ♙g4 43.g3 g5 44.♙e3 ♙e6 45.♙f2 ♙d7 46.♙e3 a5 47.♙f2

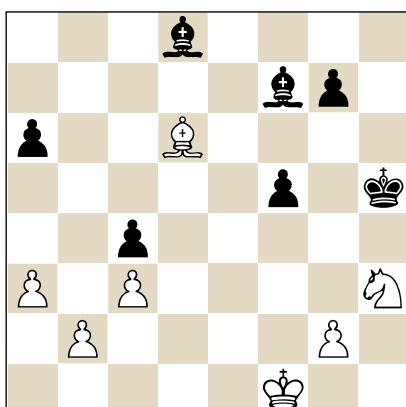
f4 48.gxf4 gxf4 49.♖d4 ♕a4 50.♗g2
♗g5 51.♗f3+ ♗f5 52.♗d2 d5 53.♗f2
♕d1 54.♗e1 ♕g4 55.♗f2 a4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Setting up a breakthrough. 56.♗g2
♗e5 57.♗f2 ♕h5 58.♗g2 f3+! 59.♗g3
♗f5! 60.♗xf3 ♗e4 61.♗d4 ♗e3!, and
the king's march to c1 is unstoppable.
A king march, see, there we have
Nigel again!

39...♕xh4 40.♕xd6 ♕d8



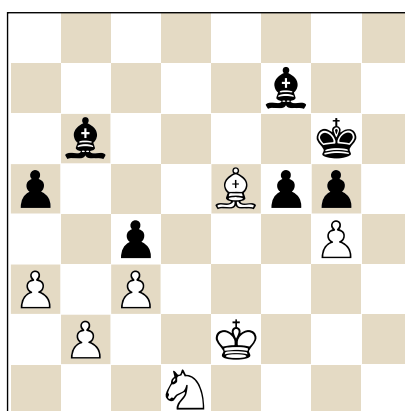
41.♗e2 After 41.♗g1 ♕g5! 42.♗e2
♗g4 43.♗f2 ♕d2 Black should win.

41...g5 42.♗f2 ♗g6 43.g4

Here Magnus should have started to
worry about the potential possibility of

**'It is indeed true that there are many
things one can or cannot believe
in, be it Santa Claus, Global Warming
or fortresses.'**

a fortress, but that didn't occur to him.
43...♕b6 44.♕e5 a5 45.♗d1

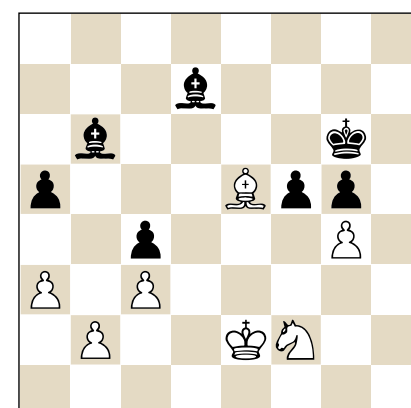


45...f4??

As he confessed after the game,
Magnus is not really a believer in
fortresses. I don't know if he was
serious or if he was trolling a colleague
of his who once said a similar thing,
but it is indeed true that there are
many things one can or cannot
believe in, be it Santa Claus, Global
Warming or fortresses. Let's look at
the alternatives.

45...fxg4 46.♗e3 ♕e6 47.♕g3 is
probably a fortress as well: 47...♗f6
48.♗d2 ♕c5 49.♗e2 ♗e7 50.♗f2 ♗d7
51.♗e2 ♗c6 52.♗d2 ♗b5 53.♗c2 ♗a4
54.♗d4 ♕xd4 55.cxd4 ♗b3 56.d5
♕xd5 57.♕e5 g3 58.♗e1!=.

But 45...♕e6! was very strong. White
shouldn't be allowed to establish the
♕g3/♗e3 barrier or the ♕d4/♗f2
set-up that occurred in the game.
Now White is in some kind of
zugzwang (not mutual – Black's next
move is ...♕d7!/...♕c8!), amongst
other issues: 46.♗f2 (46.gxf5+ ♗xf5!
47.♕d6 ♕f7, and the king penetrates:
48.♗f2 ♕h5+ 49.♗e1 ♕f3 50.♕g3
♕e3, and wins; or 46.a4 f4 47.♗f3
♕d7 48.♕d4 ♕xa4 49.♗f2 ♕xd4
50.cxd4 c3 51.bxc3 ♕b5, and wins; or
46.♕d6 f4 47.♗f3 ♗f6 48.♕b8 ♕d7
49.♕d6 ♕a4 50.♗f2 ♕xf2 51.♗xf2
♕d1, winning) 46...♕d7!?



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This is a lot stronger than taking
the pawn, when White still retains





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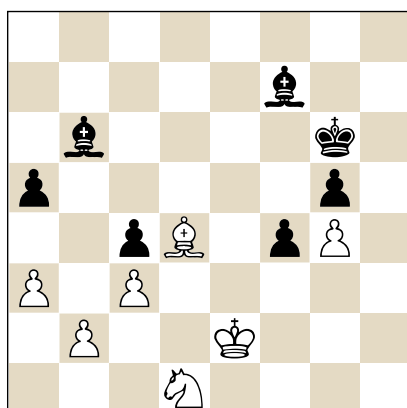
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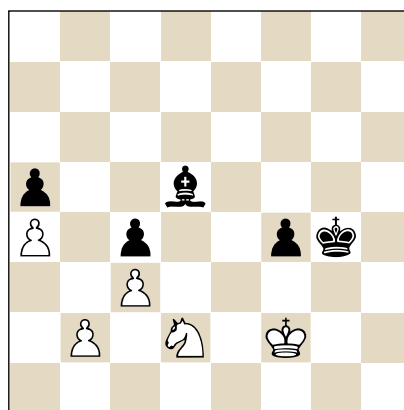
some hope of a fortress. Another zugzwang, if the bishop leaves the e5-h8 diagonal, ...f4! will win, because there won't be ♖d4: 47.♖d4. White has many moves, but they all make his position even worse than it already is (for instance 47.♘d1 f4 48.♖f3 ♖a4 49.♖e2 f3+ 50.♖e1 ♖xd1 51.♖xd1 a4 or 47.gxf5+ ♖xf5!) 47...♖c7!, and there is no longer any hope of setting up a blockade to stop the g-pawn. Not to mention that ...♖f4-♖c1 is the idea.

46.♖d4!



Now White has a fortress and I would try to break it, but since Magnus has already tried to do so, my job is to just show you the game and sum things up at the end.

46...♖c7 47.♘f2 ♖e6 48.♖f3 ♖d5+ 49.♖e2 ♖g2 50.♖d2 ♖f7 51.♖c2 ♖d5 52.♖d2 ♖d8 53.♖c2 ♖e6 54.♖d2 ♖d7 55.♖c2 ♖c6 56.♖d2 ♖b5 57.♖c1 ♖a4 58.♖c2 ♖f7 59.♖c1 ♖g6 60.♖d2 ♖b3 61.♖c1 ♖d3 62.♘h3 ♖a2 63.♖c5 ♖e2 64.♘f2 ♖f3 65.♖c2 ♖c6 66.♖d4 ♖d7 67.♖c5 ♖c7 68.♖d4 ♖e6 69.♖c5 f3 70.♖e3 ♖d7 71.♖c1 ♖c8 72.♖c2 ♖d7 73.♖c1 ♖f4 74.♖xf4 gxf4 75.♖c2 ♖e6 76.♖c1 ♖c8 77.♖c2 ♖e6 78.♖c1 ♖b3 79.♖b1 ♖a4 80.♖c2 ♖b5 81.♖d2 ♖c6 82.♖e1 ♖d5 83.♖f1 ♖e5 84.♖g1 ♖f6 85.♘e4+ ♖g6 86.♖f2 ♖xg4 87.♘d2 ♖e6 88.♖xf3 ♖f5 89.a4 ♖d5+ 90.♖f2 ♖g4 91.♘f1 ♖g5 92.♘d2 ♖f5 93.♖e2 ♖g4 94.♖f2



Draw. And while it's not clear whether Santa Claus is real, or if Global Warming is a Chinese invention, we can now certainly establish that the position after 45...f4?? was a fortress.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
New York 2016 (5)
Giuoco Piano

1.e4

After the Trompowsky in the first game, which caused an outburst of Trump jokes from the highly witty online chess community, Magnus shifted to 1.e4.

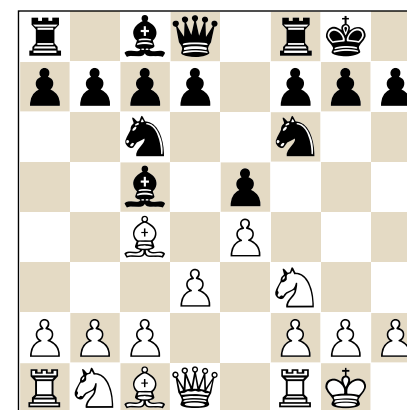
1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♖c4

The idea Magnus played in the Berlin was surprisingly successful, but as with all the ideas against the Berlin Defence, you can usually play it only once.

The opening is too solid. The Italian, however, has been very trendy recently and there was no doubt that both players would dig deeply into the move orders and the subtleties before this match.

3...♖c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 0-0

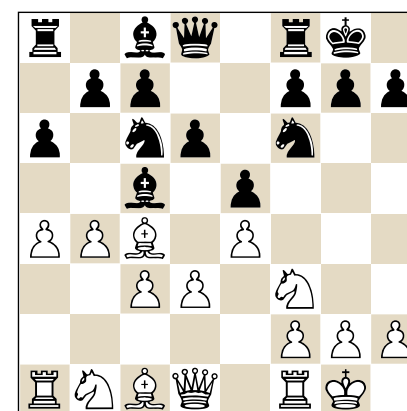
This move order is used by people who want to toy around with the idea of an immediate ...d5. White now has a wide choice of move orders to either allow or prevent it.



6.a4!? The move order introduced by Grischuk, if I am not mistaken. The point is to postpone the move c3 which is pretty much always useful in the lines with ...d6, but not necessarily so in lines with ...d5.

6...d6 After 6...d5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 we have a fresh position, where White has various ways to try and pose Black problems. Grischuk went 8.♘bd2 ♖e8 9.♘e4 ♖f8 10.c3 and was better in a blitz game that he played this year at the Eurasian Cup against an amateur.

7.c3 a6 8.b4



This early queenside expansion is not the way I handle this system with the white pieces, but it is by no means rare and has been played by many good players. Another way is to first play ♘bd2, ♖e1, ♘f1, ♘g3 and only then see whether to start the expansion with b4.

8...♖a7 9.♖e1 ♘e7

A very typical manoeuvre for the Italian and the Anti-Berlin.

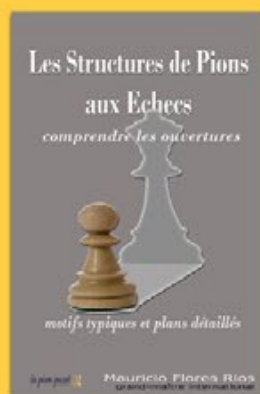
10.♘bd2 ♘g6 11.d4

Otherwise Black would have advanced in the centre himself with ...c6-d5. Here it would be somewhat

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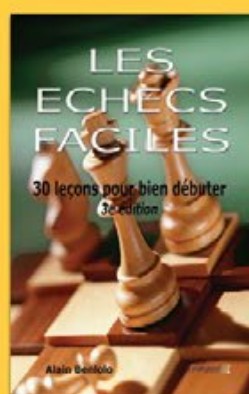
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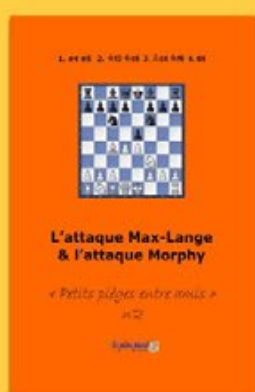
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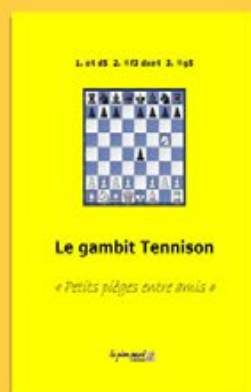
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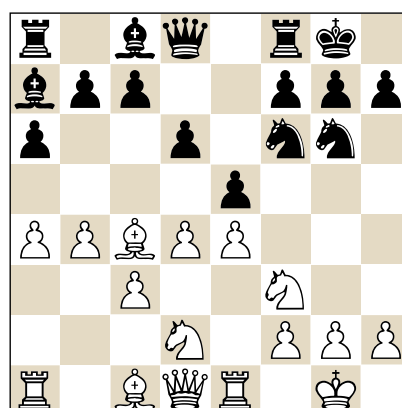
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premature to claim a white opening advantage. White does have more space in the centre and on the queenside, but Black has a clear way of countering this, with a well-timed ...d5!. Karjakin started taking some time around here and it is not entirely clear where his preparation ended. Magnus was still in book, judging by the speed with which he made his moves.

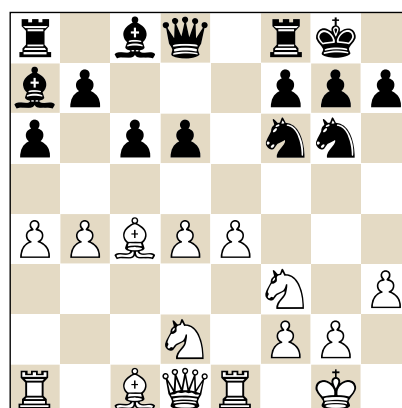


11...c6 An immediate reaction was possible, but Karjakin decides to strengthen the ...d5 break first.

11...exd4 12.cxd4 d5 13.exd5 ♖xd5 leaves White with an isolated pawn, but he has got the momentum and can try to create some concrete threats starting with 14.b5!? or the direct 14.♗e4!?

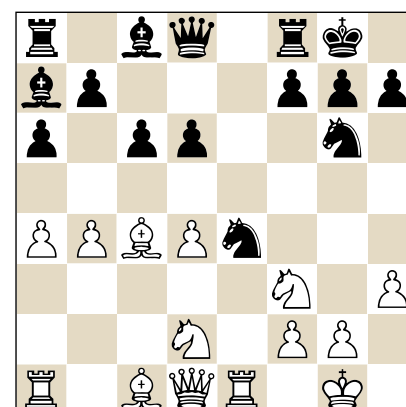
12.h3 exd4 Here, 12...d5 13.dxe5! looks quite tricky for Black. But 12...♗e8!? was a decent way of postponing immediate action. But I imagine that Karjakin was not sure that he would get another opportunity to break through in the centre after White withdraws his c4-bishop.

13.cxd4



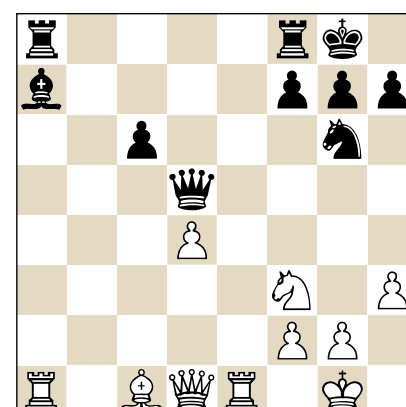
13...♗xe4 The standard 13...d5 was begging to be played, but this typi-

cal little tactical operation looks quite decent as well.



14.♗xf7+!? An interesting strategic decision, taken after quite a bit of thinking and ensuring that the game won't dry out. White also had another way of playing for an advantage, but over the board even Magnus Carlsen couldn't see beyond the human horizon.

The other way was 14.♗xe4 d5 15.♗d3!. The exclamation mark for this rather 'dumb' move is awarded for the depth of my 3400-rated friend! (15.♗g5 is the human way to try to pose problems, when the position is very double-edged after 15...f6!? 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♗b3 ♖h8 18.♗g3 f5) 15...dxe4 16.♗xe4 ♗e6, threatening ...♗d5, after which White has absolutely nothing to play for, so the next move is forced: 17.b5 axb5 (it is natural to trade the pair of pawns before trading the rest of the pieces. 17...♗d5! is stronger, when after 18.bxa6 bxa6 White still keeps some pressure, due to the fact that his weak pawn on d4 is a lot less weak than its colleague on c6. The position is pretty drawish, of course) 18.axb5 ♗d5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.bxc6 bxc6.



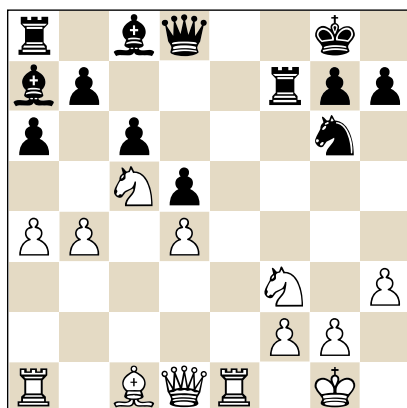
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The position appears equal, but now some magic begins: 21.♖a6! (the a7-bishop suddenly finds itself totally stuck) 21...♔b5 (21...c5 22.♙a3!) 22.♔e2! ♔b7 (preparing ...♙b6 or ...♙b8, but the magic only just started) 23.h4! ♙b6 24.♖xa8 ♖xa8 25.h5 ♘f8 26.h6, and now it becomes apparent that White stands better. Black's king will become a serious target. A very pretty variation, but for a human it is hard to see beyond the ...♙e6-♙d5 plan.

14...♖xf7 15.♘xe4 d5

From a strategic point of view, this move seems very shaky to me. Black weakens the dark squares c5 and e5. Sergey followed it up by tripling along the f-file, which made a lot of sense, so in a way this decision was justified and doesn't deserve serious criticism. Still, I don't quite see what's wrong with the much less committal 15...♙f5!?

16.♘c5



A good square for the knight. Long-term White stands much better. He will be practically a pawn up after a4-a5, but he will soon have to deal with some unpleasant counterplay along the f-file.

16...h6 17.♖a3

Such rook lifts are always nice. Die-hard Magnus fans will probably recall his first victory of his second match with Vishy Anand.

17...♙f5 18.♘e5

Generally a very clever way of solving the potential problems along the f-file, but Magnus seems to have underestimated Black's counterplay after 19...♔h4!



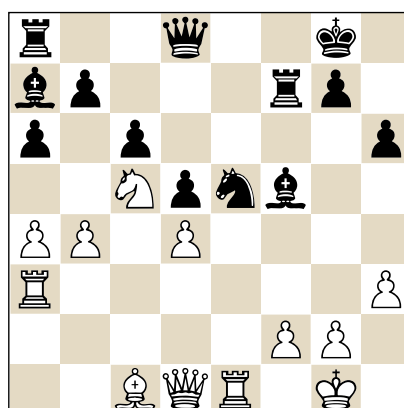
OLE KRISTIAN STRØM

Muscovites on the streets of New York: Sergey Karjakin, well protected against the cold, with his head coach Vladimir Potkin and his wife Galia.

18.a5!? appeals to me: 18...♔f6 19.♖e2 ♖af8, when Black is fully mobilized, but probably 18.♘e5 is a better version for White here. It is also possible to prepare it with a move like 20.♔e1!?

Finally, 18.♖ae3 allows 18...a5, and things get messy.

18...♘xe5

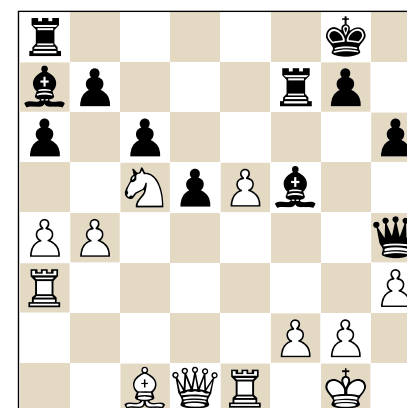


19.dxe5

Once again, strategically justified, but this allows the game to spin out of control. Fortunately for Magnus, Sergey went for a passive defence. The game spun out of control later anyway, but let's take it one step at a time.

19.♖xe5 leads to a complicated and balanced position. The critical move, 19...♙b8, is met by the sharp 20.♘xb7!?, when White is likely to sacrifice an exchange, with full compensation at the very least: 20...♔f6 (20...♔f8 21.♘c5 a5! is messy and probably a better way, from a purely practical point of view) 21.♖e8+ ♔h7 22.♘c5 ♙h2+ 23.♙xh2.

19...♔h4!



20.♖f3 20.e6? is solidly met by 20...♙xe6! and could have very well been missed by White.

20...♙xc5

Going for a passive defence, which,



The press conferences were rightly popular, as these were the only moments when the press and the public could really see the players.

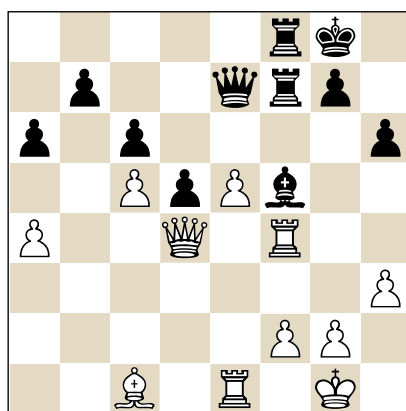
although it worked out in the end, shouldn't be praised.

Alternatively, 20...♘g6! 21.♞xf7 ♘xf7 22.e6 ♘g6 leads to a very double-edged position, where Black has chances to take over. As often with those advanced pawns, like the one on e6, it can be an asset but also a liability. For now the b4-pawn is hanging, and ...a5! is also a threat: 23.♙a3 ♞e8 (23...b5!?) 24.♞g4 ♞f6 25.♙b2 ♞xb2 26.♞xg6 ♞e7 27.♜d3, with an unclear and more or less balanced position in which Black shouldn't be the one to worry.

21.bxc5 ♞e8

Black gets all his pieces into play, but White has a pawn majority on the kingside and should be better.

22.♞f4 ♞e7 23.♞d4 ♞ef8



24.♞f3

24.♞e3 could have been played at once. I think Magnus thought he could afford to lose as much time as he pleased, but it eventually turned out that tempi did matter. White may

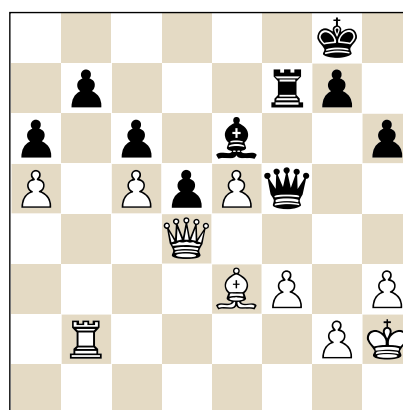
have overestimated his position here. There is really not much he can do, given that Black pays attention here and there.

24...♙e4 25.♞xf7 ♞xf7 26.f3 ♙f5 27.♞h2

27.g4 ♙e6 28.f4 g6, followed by an immediate or later f5, leads to complications, but Black holds his own thanks to his excellent control of the light squares.

27...♙e6 28.♞e2 ♞g6 29.♙e3 ♞f7 30.♞f2 ♞b1 31.♞b2 ♞f5 32.a5

Unnecessary. In fact, this might even be harmful, as the a5-square in rare cases can be used for the bishop or queen to enter.



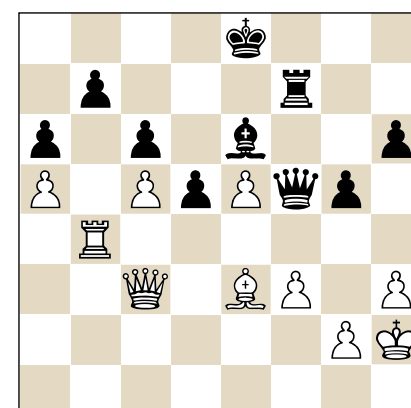
32...♞f8!

Suddenly showing that Black also has a plan.

33.♞c3

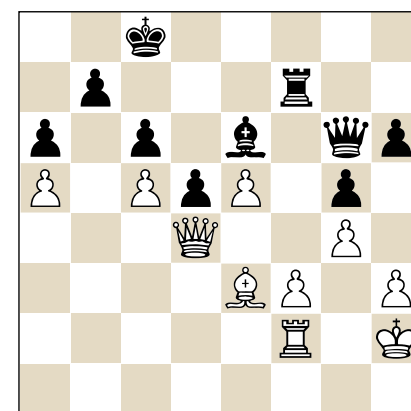
33.f4 was always an option, but Black has 33...h5, and now I don't think there is much left to do actually.

33...♙e8 34.♞b4 g5



White was maybe happy to provoke ...g5, but there are really not many reasons left as to why he should be better. And with Black's king running to safety, the position is just complicated and, if it is ever opened, double-edged.

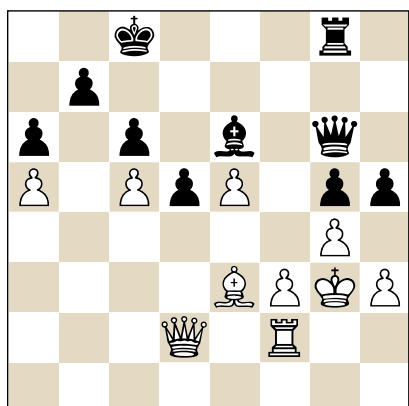
35.♞b2 ♙d8 36.♞f2 ♙c8 37.♞d4 ♞g6 38.g4?!



White has to sit and watch, so perhaps it would have made sense to do without this move and start accepting the idea of a draw.

38...h5 39.♞d2 ♞g7 40.♙g3 ♞g8

Both sides have few ideas, but for Black it is a lot easier to stay put, while White already has to watch his king.



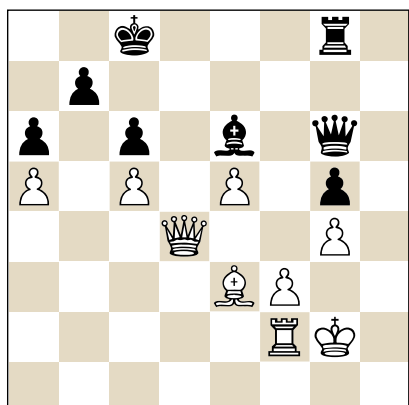
41. ♖g2?

Apparently, Carlsen forgot to write down a move and was not quite sure whether he had already made 40 moves or just 39 as per his scoresheet. To be on the safe side, he made one more, but in his confusion, this move turned out to be a mistake.

41. ♖d4 would be a better way to to mark time, when Black probably can't make much progress, but he can try to send his queen to b1 or put his rook on the h-file, if White were to remove his queen from d4, to maybe sacrifice the pawn with d4!?, as in the game. If White is careful though, he should hold this position without too many worries.

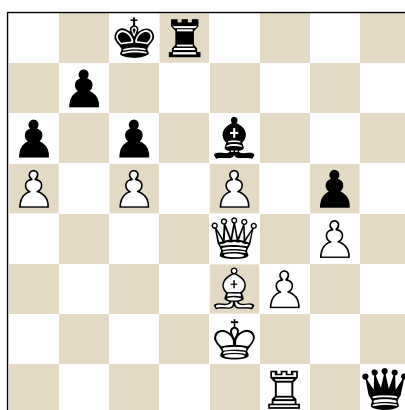
41... hxc4 42. hxc4 d4! 43. ♖xd4

43. ♙xd4 keeps control of the second rank, but after 43... ♖h6 44. ♖g1 ♖h3 45. ♖e2 ♖f8 46. ♖h2 (otherwise ... ♙d5!) 46... ♖g3+ 47. ♖g2 ♖xf3 48. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 White has to defend a very unpleasant endgame.



43... ♙d5? Too slow, Black had to grab the h-file immediately:

43... ♖h8! 44. ♖e4 ♖h6 45. ♖f1. There is no forced win here, but Black can tickle the white king without much risk. The fact that he is a pawn down simply doesn't count: 45... ♖h1+ 46. ♖e2 ♖d8 (46... ♖a1 47. ♙xg5! ♖h1 48. ♙d2, and, miraculously, White is not getting mated; 46... ♙d5!? leads to some a very crazy line, which apparently is semi-forced: 47. ♖f5+ ♖b8 48. ♖f6 ♖e8 49. ♙xg5 ♙c4+ 50. ♖d2 ♖a1 51. e6 ♖a2+ 52. ♖c3 ♖b3+ 53. ♖d2 ♖d3+ 54. ♖c1 ♙xe6 55. ♙d2 ♖a3+ 56. ♖b2 ♖xc5+ 57. ♖b1 ♙a8, and the king hunt will continue, although if White keeps playing like a machine he maintains excellent survival chances) 47. ♖f1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Here Sergey stopped, seeing that there is no way to continue the attack, but in fact he can just retreat, 47... ♖h6, and after ... ♖b8-a8/ a7/ and ... ♖d5 and possibly some clever bishop manoeuvre, Black will resume the attack and very likely pick up the e5-pawn in the process. To the question that you might have: 'But is White just going to sit and wait? Doesn't he have ideas of his own?'. The answer is: 'Yes he is, and no he doesn't'.

44. e6

Here, 44. ♖g3 right away was possible as well, but this looks safer. Now White is out of serious danger.

44... ♖xe6 45. ♖g3 ♖e7 46. ♖h2

White regains control and the game quickly fizzles out.

46... ♖f7 47. f4 gxf4+ 48. ♖xf4 ♖e7 49. ♖h5 ♖f8 50. ♖h7 ♖xf4 51. ♖xe7 ♖e4

Celeb 64

John Henderson

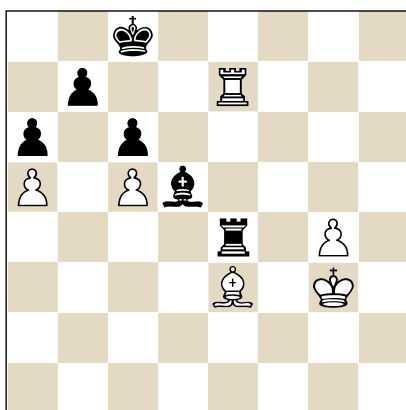


John Urschel

'Football is Family' is the latest series of NFL TV commercials running across America just now, and one of the stars is Baltimore Ravens offensive lineman John Urschel as you've probably never seen a pro-footballer before: he's the one taking on 50 of Baltimore's youngest chess whizzes in a simultaneous display!

Urschel is 6-foot-3 and weighs more than 300 pounds, and he defies just about every stereotypical image you've ever had of a pro-footballer, because the big man matches his brawn with his brains by also pursuing a Ph.D in math at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has published a paper titled 'A Cascadic Multigrid Algorithm for Computing the Fiedler Vector.'

Commentators have also now taken to describing Urschel as both a master on the field... and on the chess board. That's because earlier this year, Urschel – who has a USCF rating of 1600 – played U.S. champion Fabiano Caruana in the Liberty Science Center's 'World Blitz Chess Title Bout'. It was staged as part of the center's Genius Gala, with the time-control of two minutes for Caruana and three for Urschel. Yes, Caruana won, but it was no pushover, as he was down to just 39 seconds when he did. Afterwards, Urschel got to hang out with Caruana and GM Robert Hess. 'He was actually more excited to meet me than I was to meet him', Hess said. 'It's just unbelievable how much he loves chess.' ■



White can reach f6 with his king and push his pawn all the way to g6, when Black will place his king on e8 and his bishop on d3. There is no way for White to make any progress, and since both players saw this not very complicated scenario, a draw was agreed on.

A missed opportunity by Sergey. Magnus is known to occasionally underestimate danger and it would have been an excellent statement by Sergey, if not to throw the Viking off the cliff, then at least to push him all the way to the edge.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
New York 2016 (8)
Queen's Pawn, Colle System

I don't know whether it was the frustration of not being able to win a game, the fear of not winning the match, or pressure from the media and the public, but whatever the reason, Game 8 was clearly the one with which Magnus wanted to finally pull ahead – at any cost.

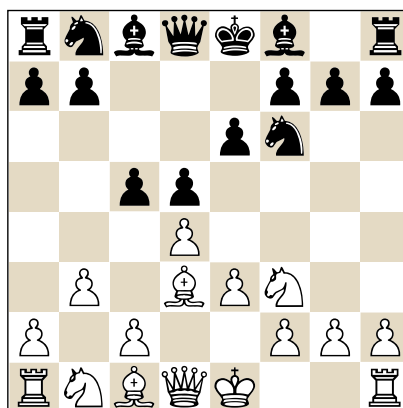
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3

With a must-win mind-set, White doesn't want to take chances and allow any strong preparation by his opponent to neutralize the game, so Magnus decides to try and surprise Sergey as early as possible, while at

'Whatever the reason, Game 8 was clearly the one with which Magnus wanted to finally pull ahead – at any cost.'

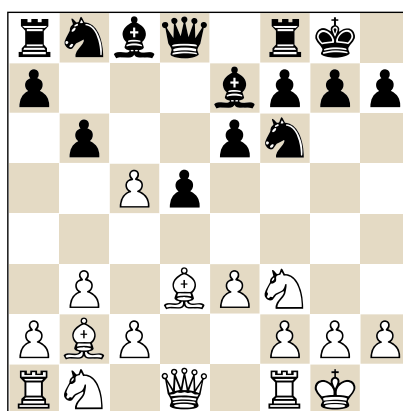
the same time keeping all the pieces on the board.

3...e6 4.♙d3 c5 5.b3



I am not really into names, but as far as I know this set-up is called the Zukertort Variation of the Colle System.

5...♙e7 6.O-O 0-0 7.♙b2 b6 8.dxc5!?



A typical example of a modern twist to an ancient variation. I would guess the authentic handling of this position was to establish a knight on e5 and start a kingside attack, but I imagine the computer would then shout something like '-0.12' and Peter Heine Nielsen would have trouble advising it to Magnus Carlsen with a clear conscience.

8.♘bd2 ♙b7 9.♘e5 ♘c6 10.a3, followed by f4, is how most games went.

8...♙xc5

8...bxc5!? is very principled, but

modern top players usually try to avoid the smallest strategic concessions in the opening, e.g. an isolated pawn or, as in this case, hanging pawns.

9.♘bd2 ♙b7 10.♙e2 ♘bd7

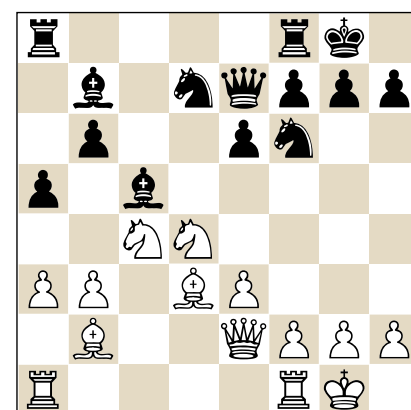
Black's position is very solid, and although I expected a very double-edged fight after Carlsen's 3.e3, I started wondering whether we were not in for another dry encounter. White can try plans with c4 or e4, but in both cases there is really not much for Black to worry about.

11.c4 dxc4

The simplest response. This and the following five moves by Karjakin totally neutralize the illusion of White's slight advantage in this symmetrical position. Solid handling of the opening by Black.

12.♘xc4 ♙e7 13.a3 a5 14.♘d4

For a second there is the illusion that White maintains slight pressure due to his control of the weakened b5-square, but Black has more than one good way to compensate for this ephemeral concession.



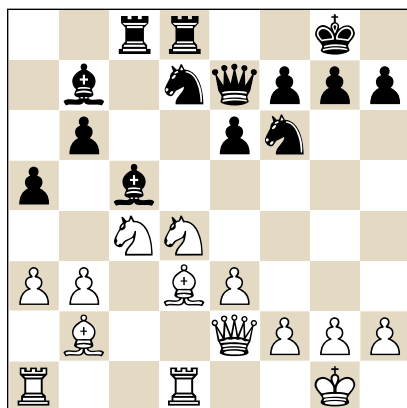
14...♙fd8

Placing the rook on the open file and introducing the strong idea of ...♘f8-♘g6.

While following the game, I came up with another interesting idea for Black: **14...♙xd4!?** **15.♙xd4** (15.exd4 ♘d5 leaves White with the rather

important bishop pair) 15...e5! (now the b6-pawn is obviously taboo – e.g. 16... ♖d5!) 16. ♖b2 e4 17. ♖c2. Here, all pieces on the board are jealous of the b2-bishop, but Black has strong counterplay against the unstable knight on c4. A possible line is 17... ♗e6 18.a4 ♖d5 19. ♖fd1 ♖ac8 20. ♖d4 ♖c5, with excellent chances for Black. Next is ...♖c7, ...♖fc8, when ...♗xb3 becomes a serious threat.

15. ♖fd1 ♖ac8



16. ♖ac1

This and White's next move were criticized by some strong spectators, such as Peter Svidler, but to be frank, it was already quite hard for Carlsen to match his moves with his approach to this game. White really has not many ideas to cause problems for Black, but playing a move like 17.b4 and trading all pawns would be totally against the strategy that Magnus chose for this game.

16. ♗b5 makes sense. A possible line then is 16... ♗f8 17. ♖e5!? (an attempt to do something clever) 17... ♗g6 18. ♖xg6 hxg6 19. ♖d6 ♖xd6 20. ♗bxd6, and Black can even play 20... ♖c5!?, with a sterile position.

16. ♗c2!? is somewhat more poisonous. Now 17.b4 is a threat: 16...e5!?. With the knight on c2, this looks very sensible (16... ♗d5 17. ♗g4!? is equal): 17.e4 ♗e6 18.b4 ♖f8 19.f3 ♖c6!?, followed by ...♖a4 and possibly ...♗b8-c6, with a very fine position.

16... ♗f8 17. ♗e1

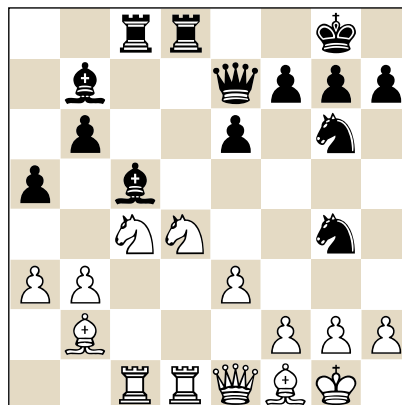
This, followed by ♖f1, is one of those Karpovian ideas that appeal to Magnus and my friend Erwin l'Ami. But while Erwin has a rather specific

taste, and probably genuinely likes it, Magnus, I suspect, wasn't that happy with it, but decided to play it anyway. In general, White hasn't done much wrong to be worse yet.

17. ♗c2 is still an option here: 17... ♗d5 18. ♗g4 ♗g6, with a comfortable position for Black. He might even consider ...f5!? at some point, but if he wishes to be solid, he may also not consider it.

17... ♗g6 18. ♖f1 ♗g4!?

Throwing a knight out there, hinting that Black already has ideas of his own. I was expecting the super-solid 18... ♗e4, but there were also other fun moves, e.g. 18... ♗h4!?. Black can afford some variety at this point.



19. ♗b5?! The first of many moments in this game where Magnus is trying to bend objectivity and ask Sergey some very challenging questions.

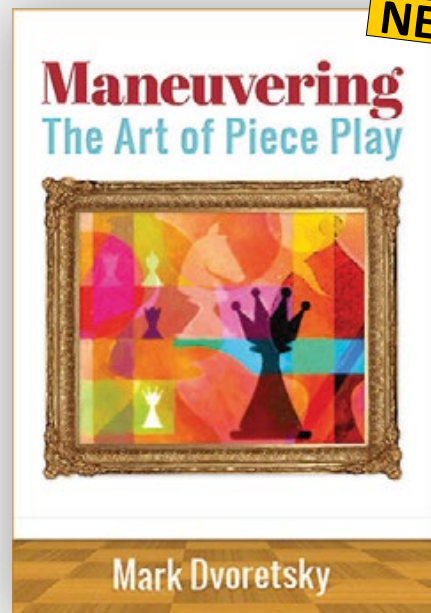
19... ♖c6?!

A solid move, but it was already possible to grab Magnus by the scruff of the neck.

19... ♗g5! was the way to punish White. Sergey wasn't sure about the knight jump to d6, but it doesn't really work for White: 20.h3 (after 20. ♗bd6 any move forward does it for Black, although it doesn't look very obvious: 20... ♖xd6 – 20... ♗h4!?. 20... ♗f4!? – 21. ♗xd6 ♗4e5 22. ♗h1 ♖xc1 23. ♖xc1 ♖f3!, followed by ...♗h4, is a good example of how quickly things can go wrong for White) 20... ♗4e5 21. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 22. ♖xe5! (a sad must) 22... ♗xe5 23. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8, and Black is slightly better for free, thanks to his powerful bishop pair in the endgame. Of course, with good defending

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White is far more likely to hold this than not.

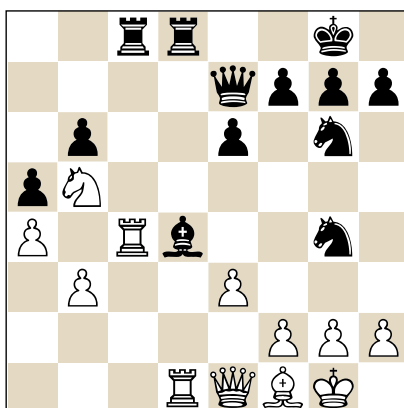
20.a4 ♖d5!? A nice move, keeping the tension. After Sergey missed the chance to grab the initiative with 19...♔g5!, I expected he would just go for the rook trade and try to simplify his way to a draw.

21. ♖d4

Inviting some exchanges, not to end the game, but to get something going.

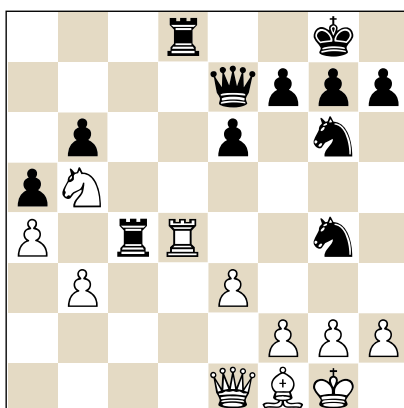
21...♖xc4 22. ♖xc4 22.bxc4 was suggested here as well, but Black has a nice plan: ...♘f6-♘d7, ...♖b4, ...♘c5, when he has nice control of the dark squares. Poor Magnus, there's just no way to pose Black any problems.

22...♖xd4



23. ♖dxd4 23.exd4 is not that stupid, but after some natural manoeuvring, 23...♘f6 24.g3 ♔d7 25.♖dc1 ♘e7 26.♖g2 ♘fd5, Black is once again ultra-solid. White's isolated pawn is not weak at all, but his only idea, which is to push the kingside pawns, seems rather far-fetched. He can safely proceed with h4, ♖f3, ♔g2, but once he dares to push g4, his f4-square will be weakened and Black will start getting ideas of his own.

23...♖xc4



What's happening? Sergey Karjakin has just played 51...h5 in Game 8 and Magnus Carlsen realizes he is lost. For the first time in a World Championship match he will be trailing.

24.bxc4!?

If White is to capture with a piece, he can forget about trying to pose Black any problems. In fact, I would prefer Black, thanks to his nice knights and the slightly ugly pawn b3-bishop c4 combo. But both Sergey and my computer claim that the position is totally equal.

24...♘f6 24...♘6e5 is more forcing, but White has an interesting idea: 25.♔d2 ♘c6 26.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 27.♔xd8+ ♘xd8 28.c5.

25. ♔d2 ♖b8!

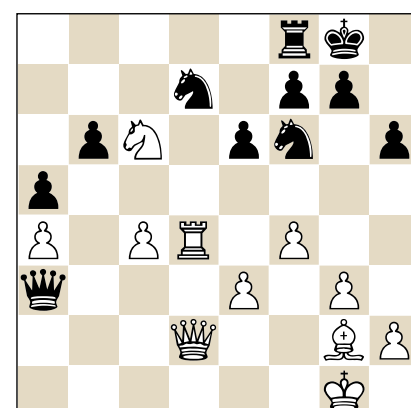
There is no need to have the d-file. I would, without any doubt, already prefer Black, but my analysing partner insists that this position is totally equal and his rating is about 600 points higher than mine. The potential to establish a knight on c5 is all I can see here.

26.g3 ♘e5

As Sergey said, 26...♘f8 would have been even more solid, but although the text-move allows complications, they are not exactly bad for Black, so why not?

27. ♖g2 h6 28.f4!? ♘ed7 **29. ♘a7** Magnus finally managed to create some chances of his own, but Sergey's response is excellent.

29...♔a3! 30. ♘c6 ♖f8



31.h3!?

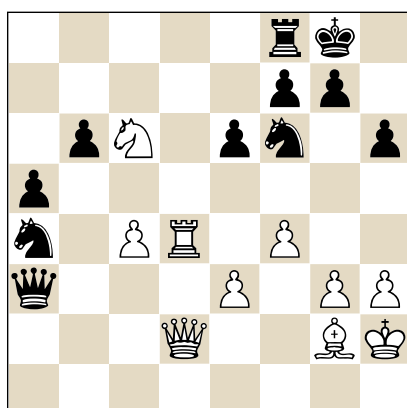
Maintaining the tension. The obvious 31.♖xd7 would lead to a very complicated, but probably rather drawish position: 31...♘xd7 32.♔xd7 ♔xe3+ 33.♔f1 ♔c1+ 34.♔f2 ♔xc4. White's king is too exposed to have any real hopes of winning the game. A very logical follow-up would be 35.♖f1 ♔c5+ 36.♔g2 ♔c2+ 37.♔g1 ♔c5+ 38.♔h1!? ♔f2, and White can,

of course, try to keep avoiding the perpetual (as can Black, by the way), but with two extra pawns Black is not in any real danger.

31...♖c5 32.♔h2!

Such a move is always nice to make. Now White has reasonable compensation for the pawn thanks to his control of the d-file and ideas to harass the f6-knight with either e4-e5 or g4-g5.

32...♖xa4



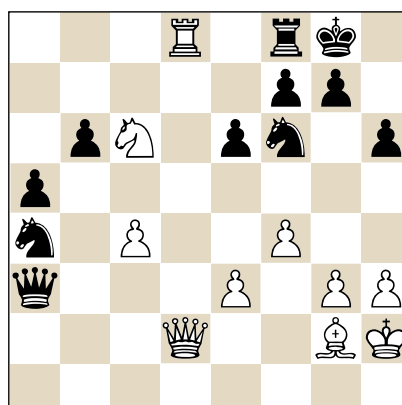
33.♖d8

A very counter-intuitive move. White still stays within the margin, but his compensation for the pawn becomes a little vague now. His idea was probably to stop Black from playing ...♗b2 and simplifying the position.

33.e4 was a very logical way to push forward: 33...♗b2 (33...♖c5 34.e5 looks rather uncomfortable for Black, although after 34...♖h5 35.♗f2 he is apparently fine in the chaos arising after, for example, 35...f6!). Now the queen trade leads to eventual simplifications and a draw, while trying to keep the queens leads to a messy position with Black doing very well: 34.♗e3 ♖c5 35.e5 ♖fe4!? 36.♖xe4 ♖xe4 37.♗xe4 a4 38.f5. Setting up some desperate perpetuals, e.g. 38...exf5 39.♗xf5 a3 40.♖e7+ ♔h8 41.♖g6+! ♔g8 42.♖e7+.

33.g4!? causes Black some problems, but once again the easiest way to solve them is by offering the queen trade: 33...♗b2!? 34.g5 ♗xd2 35.♖xd2 hxg5 36.fxg5 ♖h5, and this is one of those positions in which White will probably eventually settle for a draw

(♖a2/♖c5/♖b2/♖a4, for example). His pieces are all better placed, but Black is still a full pawn up.



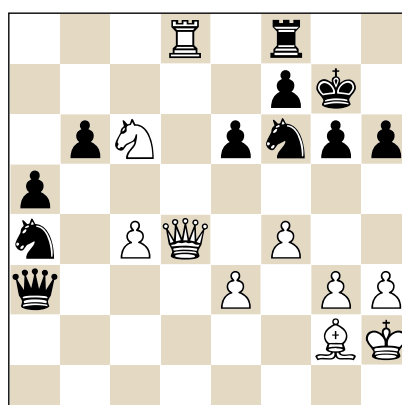
33...g6

33...♖xd8 34.♗xd8+ ♔h7 35.♖e5 ♗xe3 36.♖xf7 ♖g8 is leading to a draw, for example after 37.♗e8 ♖c5 38.♖e5 ♖f6 39.♗g6+ ♔g8.

33...h5!? is a brilliant way to play for an advantage. Now, after the rooks come off, Black can play ...h4 gxh4 and ...♗xe3, destroying White's kingside. White can hold on with 34.e4 ♖xd8 35.♗xd8+ ♔h7 36.♖e5 h4 37.gxh4 ♗e3 38.♖xf7 ♗xf4+ 39.♔h1, and Black doesn't really have any advantage here, although it already looks close: 39...♖c5!? 40.♖g5+ ♔g6 41.♗xb6, and White is holding.

34.♗d4 ♔g7

The pin is not at all dangerous for Black and now, after facing incredibly solid and decent play from Sergey, who refused to crack under pressure in time-trouble, Magnus himself cracks.

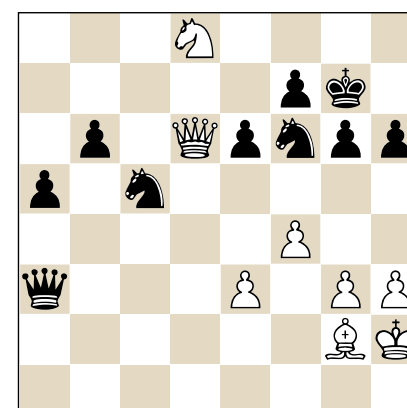


35.c5?? A disaster. Magnus probably imagined that after 36.♖xd8,

♗d6-e7 will be a threat Black will have trouble parrying, but in fact Black can just bring his queen back to d7.

35.♖d7!, removing the rook from the exchange and getting ready to place it behind Black's extra pawn for when the queens come off, would lead to complete equality after 35...♗c5 (35...♖c5!? 36.♖a7 ♗a2 37.g4 g5 38.f5 a4 is double-edged, but I doubt Sergey would go for it, and if he did, I doubt Magnus would mind) 36.♖a7 ♗xd4 37.exd4, and although a pawn down, White is not at all worse in this endgame. But neither is Black: 37...♖c3 38.♖f1 ♖fe4 39.♖d3 g5, with a complicated and balanced endgame fight.

35...♖xd8 36.♖xd8 ♖xc5 37.♗d6



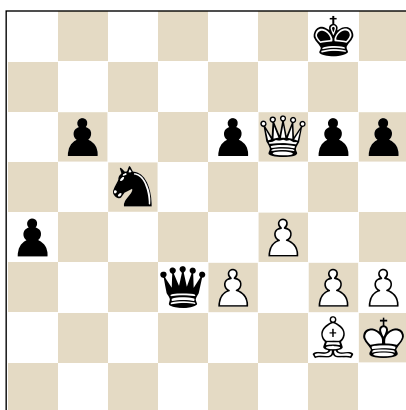
37...♗d3??

Blundering back. It was time-trouble, but Sergey saw the correct idea, so with a little more luck he could have gone for it as well: 37...♗a4! (the same idea of meeting 38.♗e7 with 38...♗d7!) 38.♗xb6. Sergey said this is unclear, but if not for the heat of the battle he would have seen that Black is completely winning. The easiest is to put one of the two knights on d7: 38...♖cd7 (or 38...♖fd7 39.♗d6 ♗a1!, winning) 39.♗d6 ♗b4, and the a-pawn will queen itself.

38.♖xe6+!

A pretty tactic. Unfortunately for Magnus, he is still on the defensive, even after this lucky break.

38...fxe6 39.♗e7+ ♔g8 40.♗xf6 a4



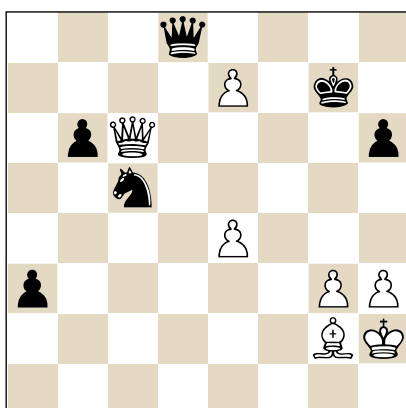
41.e4! Sergey claimed to have missed this move. Now the g6-pawn falls as well, but the mighty a-pawn is still there.

41... ♖d7 42. ♕xg6+ ♖g7 43. ♕e8+ ♕f8 44. ♕c6

I don't know whether Magnus was already playing for a draw and just couldn't make it, or whether he still had hopes. At any rate, this move is fine.

44. ♕g6+ doesn't force a draw after **44... ♖h8**, but the position is objectively fine for White here, too, e.g. **45.e5 a3 46. ♕b1?.**

44... ♕d8 45.f5 a3 46.fxe6 ♖g7 47.e7



It's logical to simplify the position, but as long as the a3-pawn is still alive, White has something to worry about.

47... ♕xe7 48. ♕xb6 ♖d3 49. ♕a5?

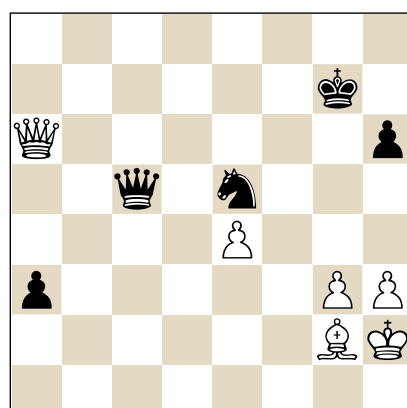
The computer claims that White is fine here with many moves, this one included, but in reality, once Black gets his queen in a dominant position on c5 and the knight on e5, blocking the e4-pawn and making the g2-bishop look silly, White's long-term prospects look pretty

'A brilliant idea, which unfortunately for Sergey is going to be totally unappreciated these days.'

grim. From a practical point of view I would expect Magnus to go **49.e5!?** here, similar to his **44.e6!?** in the 5th game, where he also was on the defensive.

After **49.e5 a2** it looks slightly scary that Black's pawn reaches the second rank, but this would seem to be the end of its glorious career: **50. ♕d4 ♖b4**. The computer says that everything is a draw here. Which is true.

49... ♕c5 50. ♕a6 ♖e5



51. ♕e6??

This move is bad because it loses by force. White should have anticipated ...h5!, and there were two ways to do that.

Firstly, **51. ♕b7+ ♖f7 52. ♕a6 h5 53.h4!.**

Or the immediate **51.h4**, when White is going to have to walk on thin ice and it would be a miracle if he survived. It is, of course, beyond human capacity to see that this holds, but a player of Magnus's calibre should on a good day be able to find at least the first few steps of this shaky path by elimination. Here is one scenario, just to show how the game Machine-Karjakin could have ended: **51... ♕c3 52. ♖h3 ♕b2**. Now there follows a sequence of more than 10 only moves: **53. ♕a7+ ♖f6 (53... ♖f7**

54.e5!) 54. ♕a6+ ♖e7 55. ♕a7+ ♖d6 56. ♕a6+ ♖c5 57. ♕a7+ ♖b4 58. ♖f1!! a2 59. ♕b8+ ♖a3 60. ♕a7+ ♖b3 61. ♕b6+ ♖c2 62. ♕f2+ ♖b1 63. ♕e1+ ♕c1 64. ♕b4+, and afterwards Karjakin would ask his opponent if he could have won after **51.h4!**, when the engine would reply something like 'No, I am sorry.'

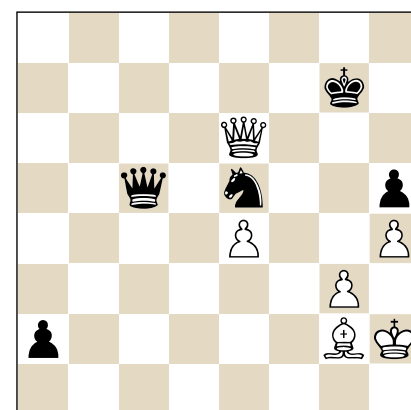
51...h5!

A brilliant idea, which unfortunately for Sergey is going to be totally unappreciated these days, because it's quite obvious to every amateur following the game live. The main point is in fact to prevent White from activating the bishop as in the long line with **51.h4 (58. ♖f1!!).**

52.h4

This would still hold, if not for the brilliant combination that is coming.

52...a2!



White resigned. An incredibly beautiful finish. I would love to end a game like this against an amateur in the third division of the Dutch league, and I can only imagine how fantastic Sergey must have felt on the big stage in New York! **53. ♕xa2 ♖g4+ 54. ♖h3 (54. ♖h1 ♕c1+) 54... ♕g1 55. ♕b2+ ♖g6!**, and White runs out of checks to find himself unable to defend against ...♖f2+.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

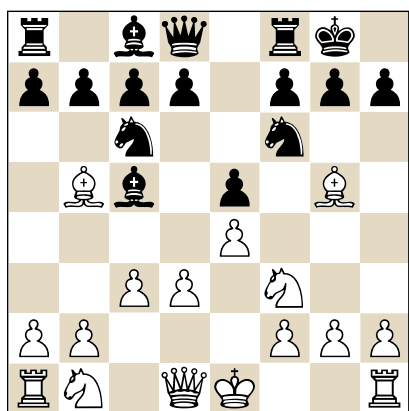
Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
New York 2016 (10)
Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

There were just three games left, and in order not to leave it up to chance in the last game, Carlsen had to pretty much go all out in Game 10, whether he felt up to it or not.

1.e4

Doing something totally obscure only backfired in Game 8, so now Carlsen was back to his original strategy of going 1.e4, developing his pieces the normal way and only surprising Sergey later on.

1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6
4.d3 ♙c5 5.c3 0-0 6.♙g5!?



A rare move order. Castling first is generally a better idea. Having said that, making those sub-optimal moves with White is often a way to get a game against a well-prepared opponent.

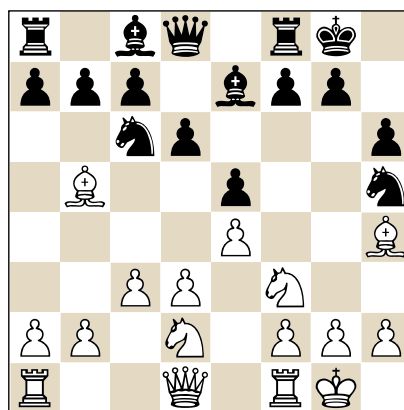
6...h6 7.♙h4 ♙e7

A standard way of meeting the early ♙g5 sortie. This is, in fact, a better version for Black of a variation played a lot by Armenians, including their guru. It goes 6.0-0 ♗e8 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 ♙e7. Whether the rook is better on e8 than f8 is somewhat debatable, but when gifted a tempo to choose, Black will definitely not spend it on playing ...♗e8 now. Having said all that, the odds that Sergey is unfamiliar with this position are high, and that is already

good enough for Magnus.

This strategy reminds me of ♙xc6 in the second game of the match in Sochi, where Magnus went for a theoretical position a tempo down, but forced Anand to think over the board. Carlsen won that game.

8.0-0 d6 9.♘bd2 ♘h5



The most straightforward. Black just has to make sure that ♘xe5 tricks don't work, otherwise this move is pretty much always good.

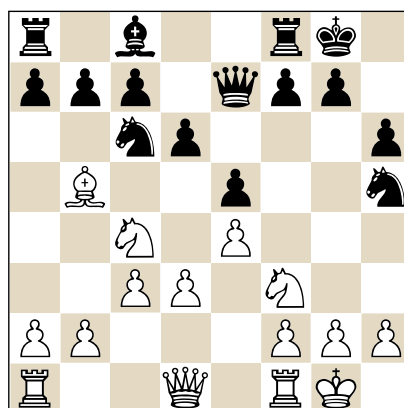
10.♙xe7

♘xe5 doesn't work in any of the versions.

10...♗xe7 11.♘c4

Blitzed out. I think it was all part of Magnus's strategy to bluff Sergey away from 11...f5!, which is obviously the most principled way.

11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.d4 makes some sense, but after 12...♘f4 13.dxe5 dxe5, Black's doubled c-pawns are fully compensated for by his excellent prospects on the kingside.



11...♘f4

After 11...f5!, the ♘xe5 tricks don't really work, which is why Black gets a good Jänisch. This is the first time Sergey got bluffed in this game, and

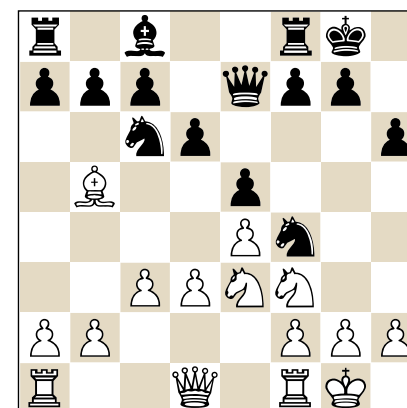
unfortunately for him not the last. The nervous pressure, combined with his enormous respect for his indeed respectable opponent started to take its toll. After 12.♘fxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xh5 (13.♘xe5 ♘f4!) 13...♘xd3 Black is very fine.

In case of 12.♙xc6 bxc6 13.♘fxe5 ♘f4! 14.♘xc6 ♗e8, Black is just taking over, with ...fxe4 and an attack to follow.

12.exf5!? ♙xf5 13.♘e3 is probably best, with a comfortable position for Black, but no more.

12.♘e3 fxe4 13.dxe4 is a structure that generally favours Black, as we know from the Jänisch.

12.♘e3



12...♗f6?!

I didn't like this at all, but it is hard to call this normal move a mistake. I was still for 12...f5!?, which is now less easy, for example: 13.g3!? (13.exf5 ♙xf5 14.♘xf5 ♗xf5 15.g3 e4! 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♘d4 ♗g5, with a somewhat complicated but fine position for Black) 13...fxe4 14.dxe4. Now the knight on h3 is slightly strange, while pulling it back would cost Black quite some time. Still, after 14...♘h3+ 15.♗g2, and now, let's say, 15...g6!?, taking control of the light squares, Black is doing fine objectively. The knight on h3 is as weird as it is annoying for White.

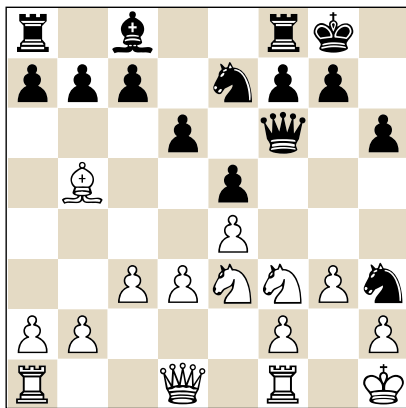
13.g3 ♘h3+ 14.♗h1

Clever, but nobody quite understood why.

14.♗g2 was a little tighter, ready to go ♘g1 if White wishes, when 14...♘e7 15.♙c4 c6 16.♙b3 d5?! tricks are less attractive here, as the king on g2 is

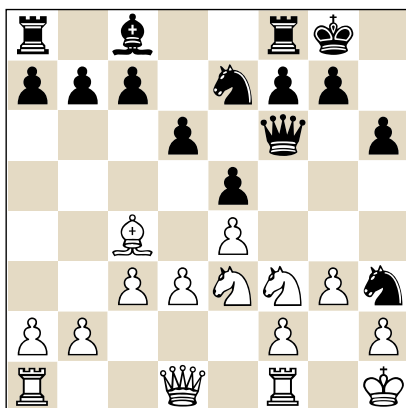
closer to the vulnerable f3-knight.

14...♖e7



15.♙c4

15.♙e2! was simply stronger, given that the text doesn't really stop ...c6-d5 anyway: 15...c6 16.♙a4 d5. Now White has a wide choice of options, with a very complicated position. The following sequence looks interesting: 17.exd5 cxd5 18.d4 e4 19.♖d2 ♗g5 20.h4! ♖f3 21.♖xf3 exf3 22.♙d3, and the mating net around White's king could also be interpreted as a weak f3-pawn. The computer prefers White, but the price of each move is probably quite high here, so the position is unclear.

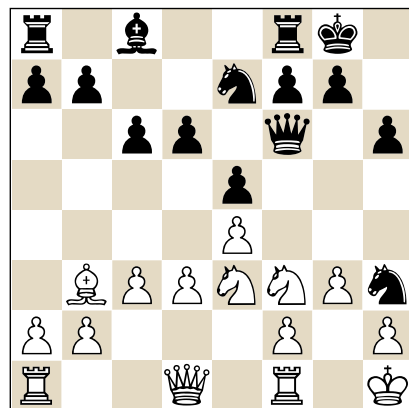


15...c6

Here and on the next move Sergey spent a tonne of time. Given that neither move was great, I think it can be concluded that the knight on h3, like a massive magnet, had messed up Sergey's inner positional compass. 15...b5!? 16.♙b3 a5 was a cool way of quickly creating counterplay on the queenside. The position is double-edged. For example, 17.a3 a4 18.♙a2 c5 19.♙e2 ♙e6 would be an insanely better version of the game.

15...g5!? is a suggestion from Grand-Master L'Ami. The game can proceed with 16.♙e2 ♖h8 17.♖g1 ♗xg1 18.♙xg1 ♙d7 19.♙af1 ♙g6 20.f4 f5, with messy play. I am pretty sure though the move never occurred to either of the players or pretty much any of the rest of us woodchoppers.

16.♙b3



16...♖g6?!

There must be something Russian about manoeuvring the knight to g6, but I constantly see players like Kramnik, Jakovenko, Tomashevsky and also Karjakin doing this routine thing in absolutely every position. Usually it is good, but here it is totally not in line with the spirit of the game. With the pawn already on g3 and the knight on h3, it was more important to create play on the queenside or in the centre immediately.

16...d5! would justify all Black's previous moves (note, though, that this idea has only become possible due to White having played 14.♙h1 instead of 14.♙g2!).

Now 17.♙e2 is the best, but after, let's say, 17...a5!? 18.a4 ♖d8 (or 18...♙e6) the position is completely unclear.

17.exd5, taking the pawn, is no good: 17...cxd5 18.♖xd5 (18.♙xd5 ♖xd5 19.♖xd5 ♙d6, with excellent compensation, or, more simply put, a strong attack) 18...♖xd5 19.♙xd5 ♖d8 20.♙e4 ♙g4 21.♙g2 ♖g5, when White is in great danger.

17.♙e2 a5

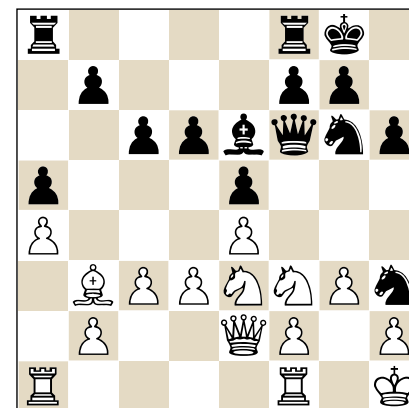
Finally Sergey starts some sort of expansion, but it is a bit late.

18.a4

18.d4!? a4 19.♙c2 is nice for White.

Black didn't quite generate any counterplay and White is ready to further consolidate with ♖ad1, perhaps double on the d-file, etc.

18...♙e6

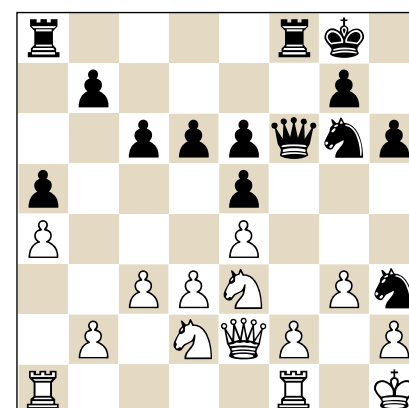


19.♙xe6?

A tactical mistake, and potentially a very costly one.

19.♖d2! first would lead to a very pleasant advantage for White. Both Black's knights are looking at the f4-square, but with the white pawn on g3, they become pointless. Black will probably try to manoeuvre his h3-knight back to f6, but that will take lots of time, and in the meantime White will push his pawns on the kingside or in the centre, getting a very pleasant advantage, so characteristic for the modern treatment of the Italian Game.

19...fxe6 20.♖d2



20...d5?

Trusting his opponent. In fact the variations arising after

20...♖xf2+! are not that hard to calculate: 21.♙g1!? is White's only try and not a very stupid one, but Carlsen didn't like it for White, understandably: 21...♖h3+ 22.♙g2 ♖hf4+

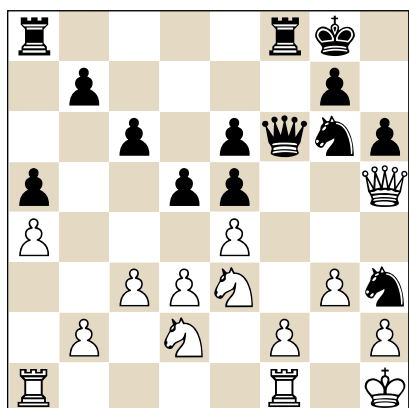
23.gxf4 ♘xf4+ 24.♖xf4. Now both captures have something to be said for them, with a highly unclear position. Having said that, I think things look good for Black, both humanly and computer-wise. Although I imagine the die-hard minor-piece fans might argue that White has trumps of his own: 24...♖xf4 (24...exf4 25.♘c2 g5 looks good for Black. White will try to block the pawns on the light squares, but it won't be easy) 25.♖f3!? b5, with a fine endgame.

21.♔g2 ♘h4+! is a draw on the spot: 22.♔g1 (22.gxh4 ♖g6+) 22...♘h3+ 23.♔h1 ♘f2+=.

21.♖h5?!

Typical Carlsen: when he smells blood and an uncertain opponent, he immediately tries to build on his success. At this point he probably already saw the ...♘xf2 idea and decided to play the man, not the cards.

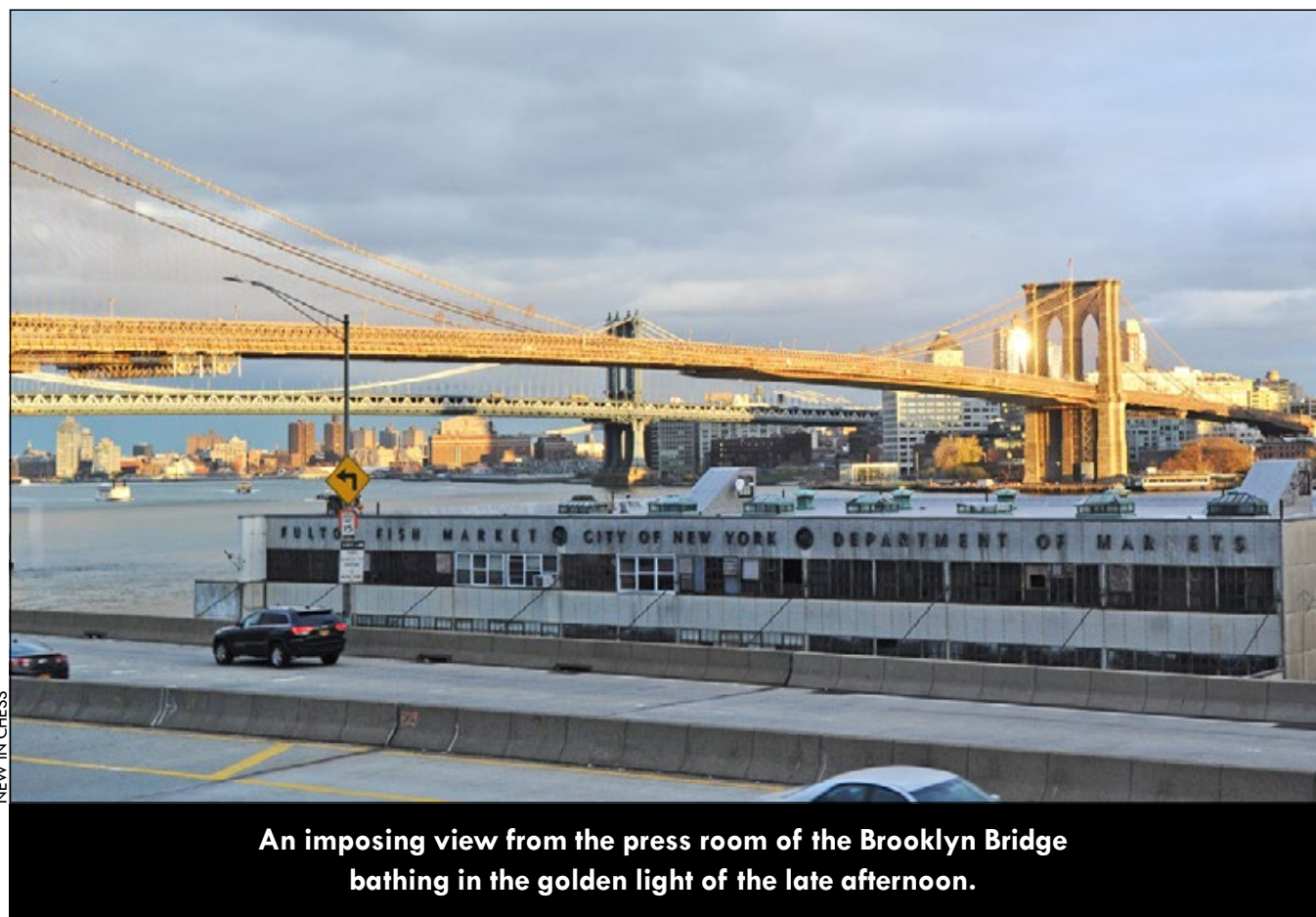
21.f3 would give White a slight and pleasant advantage. The thing about this pawn structure is that Black will have his knight pushed back, and eventually White will either try to put pressure on the e5-pawn or exchange it with a well-timed d4!.



21...♘g5?

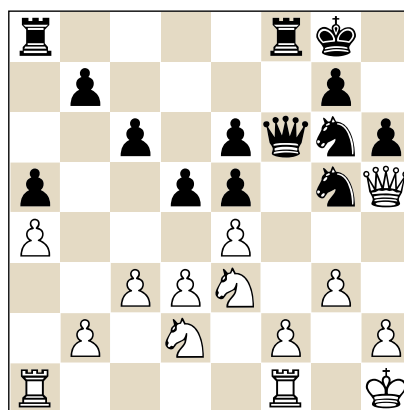
Now the bluff is justified.

21...♘xf2+ was working, but the variations here are already harder:



An imposing view from the press room of the Brooklyn Bridge bathing in the golden light of the late afternoon.

22.♔g2 (22.♔g1 ♖g5!) 22...♖f7! 23.♔g1!, and here Sergey missed a good one: 23...♖f6!, threatening 24...♖g5, and actually White has nothing better than repeating moves.



22.h4

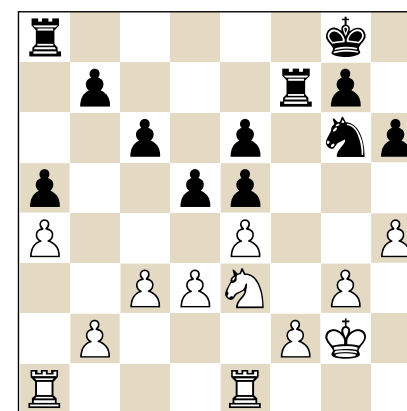
Played instantly. It was a great relief for Carlsen to get his dream position: a clearly better and risk-free endgame, one move after Sergey had

failed to spot a forced draw.

22.♖ae1!, building up the pressure, was even stronger.

22...♘f3 23.♘xf3 ♖xf3+ 24.♖xf3 ♖xf3 25.♔g2 ♖f7 26.♖fe1

It's a mystery whether Magnus had missed the ...♖af8, ♖e2, ...♘f4+ idea, but I can imagine that he did, since it clearly wasn't his best day when it came to tactics.



26...h5

From this moment onwards Magnus does his thing. But so does Sergey.

After 26...♖af8!? White has a choice. To retreat, which in fact is not that bad, since tempi are not that crucial

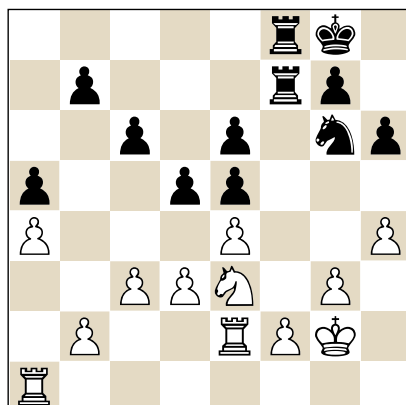
'It was a great relief for Carlsen to get his dream position: a clearly better and risk-free endgame.'

here, to enter some complications with 27.♖e2, or, perhaps the most balanced, to play 27.♘d1.

Here are the variations:

A) 27.♘d1!?. The knight is not ideal here, but it can always manoeuvre its way back into the game.

B) 27.♖e2, and now:



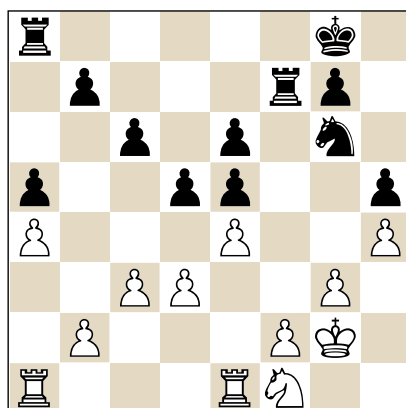
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

B1) 27...dxe4 28.♘c4! (28.dxe4 ♘f4+ would be very fine for Black: 29.gxf4 exf4 30.♘f5 exf5 31.e5 g5!) 28...exd3 29.♖d2, and Black is two pawns up, but will definitely lose them back soon. White keeps some of his advantage here.

B2) 27...♘f4+ right away isn't so easy actually: 28.gxf4 exf4 29.♘f5!, and now Black has to play a few very good moves: 29...f3+ (29...exf5 30.exd5 cxd5 31.h5) 30.♙xf3 dxe4+ 31.dxe4 ♖d7!, with good chances to hold: 32.♖g1 exf5 33.e5 f4!.

C) 27.♖f1.

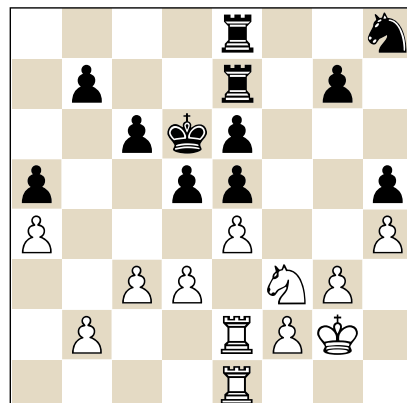
27.♘f1!



I noticed that Magnus has a talent for immediately spotting where the knights should be headed.

27...♙f8 28.♘d2 ♙e7 29.♖e2

♙d6 30.♘f3 ♖af8 31.♘g5 The pony got an upgrade. **31...♖e7 32.♖ae1 ♖fe8 33.♘f3 ♘h8!**

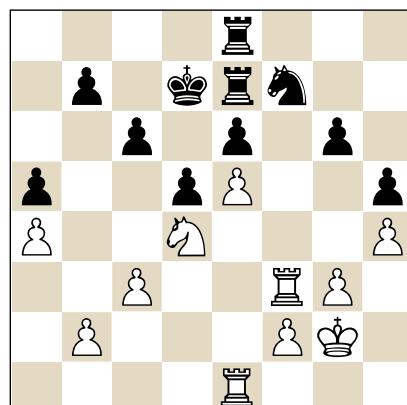


In his own way Sergey is also upgrading the pony.

34.d4

Transforming the pawn-structure and retaining the advantage. White is potentially better on both sides of the board, but Sergey stays tough for quite a while.

34...exd4 35.♘xd4 g6 36.♖e3 ♘f7 37.e5+ ♙d7 38.♖f3



38...♘h6

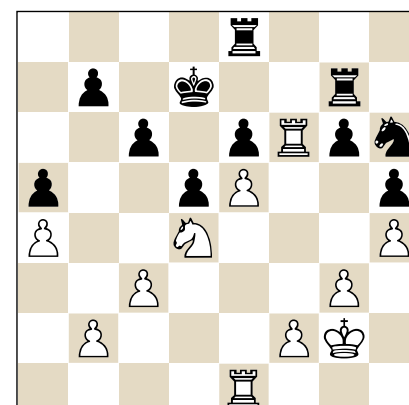
Sergey decided to stick to passive defending. I would call him mad, were it not that he had saved a couple of games in this match in precisely this way.

After 38...c5 39.♘b3 b6 40.♘d2 ♖g8 41.♖f6, White is obviously enjoying himself on the kingside, but queen-side expansion by Black can't be a bad thing.

In case of 38...g5!? 39.hxg5 ♘xg5 40.♖f6 ♘e4 41.♖h6 ♘c5 42.♖a1 ♘d3 43.♖xh5 c5 44.♘e2 ♘xb2 45.♖b1 ♘xa4 46.♖h4, it becomes quite messy, but White is still a step ahead as soon as it comes to a race:

46...♘xc3!? could invoke some déjà vu, though: 47.♖xb7+ ♙c6 48.♖xe7 ♖xe7 49.♘xc3 d4.

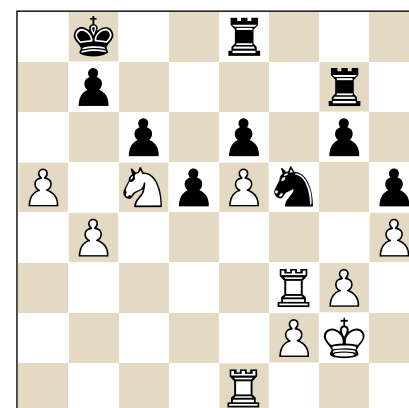
39.♖f6 ♖g7



40.b4

Strategic, but Magnus missed a killer break here: 40.c4!, and Black's position looks lost: 40...♘f5 (40...dxc4 41.♖d1 wins White the e6-pawn; after 40...♘g4 there is 41.cxd5! first, of course) 41.♘b3 b6 42.c5 ♙c7 43.cxb6+ ♙xb6 44.♖c1, and Black can't protect all of his pawns. His position collapses.

40...axb4 41.cxb4 ♘g8 42.♖f3 ♘h6 43.a5 ♘f5 44.♘b3 ♙c7 45.♘c5 ♙b8



Sergey remains tough. Bringing the king over to a7 is the best way to try and establish the last line of defence.

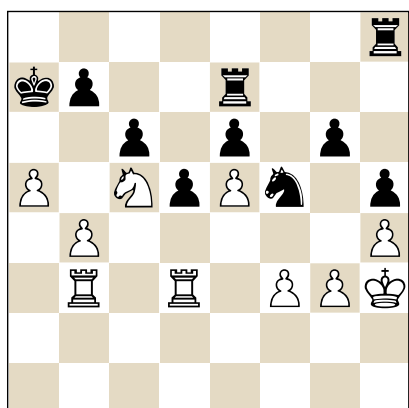
46.♖b1 ♙a7 47.♖d3 ♖c7 48.♖a3 ♘d4 49.♖d1 ♘f5 50.♙h3 ♘h6 51.f3

Introducing the idea of g4.

51...♖f7 52.♖d4 ♘f5 53.♖d2 ♖h7 54.♖b3 ♖ee7 55.♖dd3 ♖h8

White seems to have achieved the maximum, but the breakthrough 56.b5 may not necessarily lead to

a win. Considering that g4 is also an idea, Carlsen realizes that the position resembles a zugzwang and makes a clever waiting move.



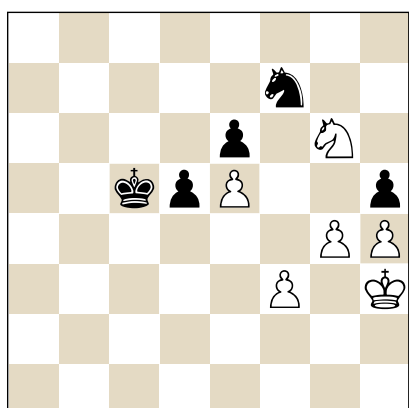
56. ♖b1!?

Critical and relevant is 56.b5, considering that 56.♖b1 is not an actual zugzwang. After 56...cxb5 57.♖xb5 ♖c8 58.g4 ♘h6 59.♖db3 ♖cc7, White has achieved quite something, but Black is not broken yet:

60.♔g3 ♘f7 61.♔f4 (61.a6 b6 62.♖xb6 ♖xc5 63.♖b7+ ♖xb7 64.♖xb7+ ♔xa6 65.♖xf7 ♔b5, and thanks to the passed d-pawn Black will be just in time with his counterplay) 61...♘d8 62.♔g5 ♖e8!. The king has marched quite far, but once White starts picking up Black's kingside pawns, he will have to deal with plenty of annoying checks.

60.a6. One of the critical ideas. Now I believe both 60... b6 and 60... bxa6 should hold, though none of the lines are trivial:

60...b6 61.♘b7 ♖c6 62.♘d6 ♘f7 63.♖xb6 ♖xb6 64.♘c8+ ♔xa6 65.♖xb6+ ♔a5 66.♘xe7 ♔xb6 67.♘xg6 ♔c5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

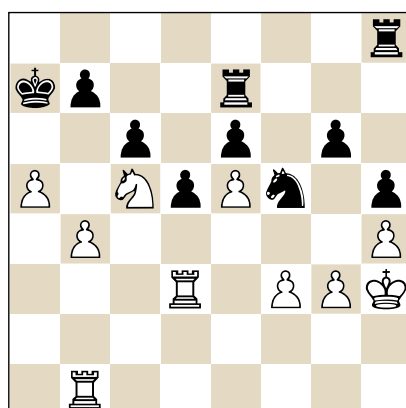
NEW IN CHESS



What relief! Elated Norwegians start clapping and yelling as Magnus Carlsen has equalled the score in Game 10.

and this knight endgame is tenable for Black, thanks to the passed d-pawn, once again.

60...bxa6 61.♖a5 ♖c6 62.♖ba3 hxg4+ 63.fxg4 ♖ec7 64.♖xa6+ ♖xa6 65.♖xa6+ ♔b8 66.♖a5 ♖f7 67.♘xe6 ♖f3+ 68.♔g2 ♖c3, and the position looks too much simplified to be winning.



56...♖hh7??

Sergey finally cracks. The first time he leaves Magnus one on one with an open goal in this match. Probably the pressure got to him; everyone is human.

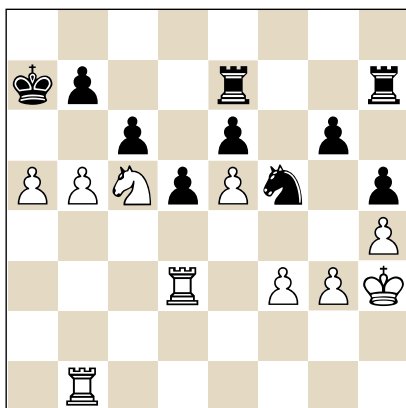
– 56...♘h6, which was suggested by Karjakin after the game, should

slowly lose too: 57.♖db3! ♖c8, and only now 58.g4! ♘f7 59.♖e1! ♖f8!? (the best try, otherwise 60.♔g3) 60.g5!! ♘d8 61.♔g3 ♖ef7 62.♖c1! ♔a8 63.♖f1 ♔a7 64.f4, and White would usually win this position by resignation, but in Sergey's case you would have to transfer the knight to d4 and prepare b5 before he will finally admit defeat.

– 56...♔a8!? works, but by a pure miracle: 57.b5 cxb5 58.♖xb5 ♖c8 59.g4 ♘h6 60.♖db3 hxg4+ 61.fxg4. Now passive defending won't work, but Black goes for the counter: 61...♖c6!! 62.♘xb7 ♖ec7!, and there is no way to stop Black's counterplay with ...♖c3+.

– 56...♖f8!. The most human way. The variations are incredibly hard to calculate, but the idea of Black's defence here is quite simple. White can either play b5 or g4, and what Black should do is brace for impact: 57.g4 (57.b5 cxb5 58.♖xb5 ♖c8 transposes to the variation examined above, in the comment to 56.b5) 57...♘h6 58.♔g3 ♘f7 59.♖e1, and here is the point behind ...♖f8: 59...

hxf4 60.fxf4 g5! 61.h5 ♘h6 62.♖d4 b6!, and White will find himself unable to contain Black's counterplay. What I have just proven is that after 56...♗f8 Black holds after both 57.b5 and 57.g4, but that doesn't mean that the position is drawn. White can try to keep manoeuvring somehow, seeking for more favourable versions of those breakthroughs. Still, if anybody would hold this, it would be Karjakin. **57.b5!**



Now Black is unable to regroup and he is completely lost.

57...cxb5 58.♖xb5 d4

The best chance. Sergey tries, but it is already too late.

After 58...♗h8 59.♖b6! Black is too late to get into a good defensive position: 59...♗he8 60.g4 ♘h6 61.♖db3, and White wins easily.

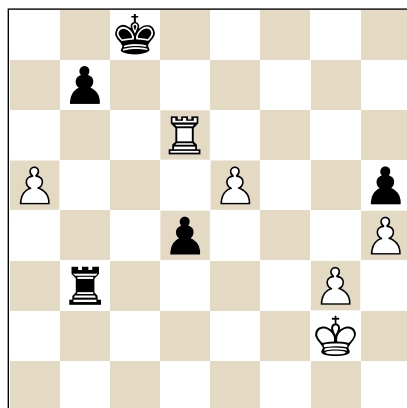
59.♖b6 ♗c7 60.♘xe6 ♗c3 61.♘f4 ♗hc7 62.♘d5 Simplifying the position, but not letting the win slip away. 62.♖xg6! would win even more convincingly.

62...♖xd3 63.♘xc7 ♖b8! 64.♘b5 ♖c8!

Still making White work for it.

65.♖xg6 ♖xf3 66.♖g2 ♖b3 67.♘d6+ ♘xd6 68.♖xd6

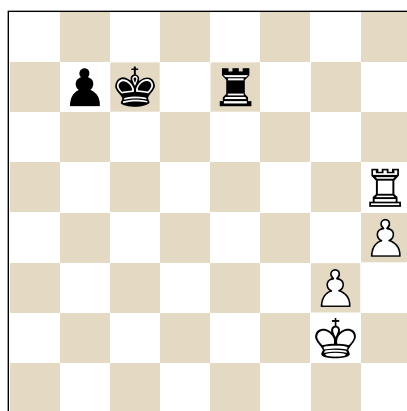
The rook endgame looks, and is, lost, but here Sergey could have asked Magnus one last question.



68...♖e3?

He could have tried 68...♖c7! 69.♖xd4 ♖b5. White has two wins now:

– 70.e6 ♖xa5 71.e7 ♖e5 72.♖d5 ♖xe7 73.♖xh5

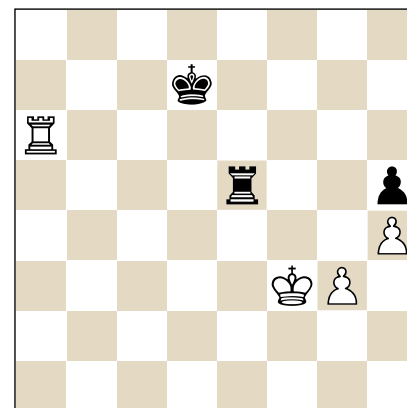


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This position is indeed winning, but it doesn't seem too trivial to me just yet: 73...♖c6 74.♖h8 b5 75.♖c8+ (75.♖b8, for example, would be a mistake: 75...♖h7!! 76.♖h3 ♖b7!, and Black reaches a queen ending)

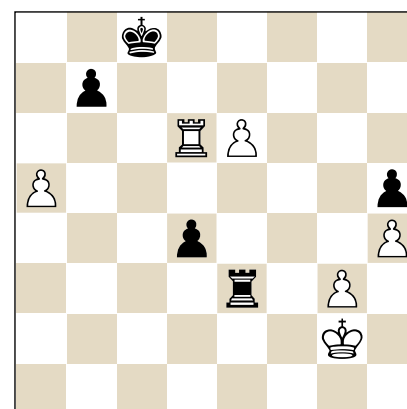
75...♖d5 76.♖b8 ♖c4 77.h5, and the connected passed pawns will do their dirty work.

– 70.♖a4!? ♖xe5 71.♖f3 ♖d7 72.a6 bxa6 73.♖xa6.



This is a draw in principle, but here the pieces are somehow placed in such a way that White wins the h5-pawn: 73...♖e7 74.♖f4 ♖b5 75.♖g6 ♖f7 76.♖g5.

69.e6!



The rest is elementary.

69...♖c7 70.♖xd4 ♖xe6 71.♖d5 ♖h6 72.♖f3 ♖b8 73.♖f4 ♖a7 74.♖g5 ♖h8 75.♖f6

Black resigned.

Not a flawless win, but a big one.

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The tiebreak

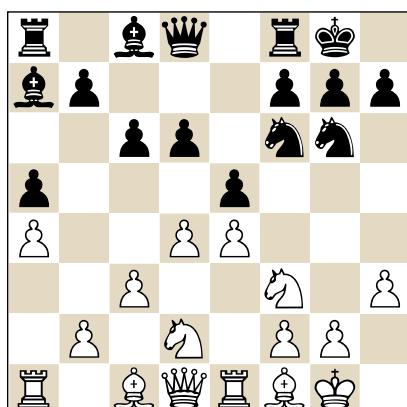


NOTES BY
Anish Giri

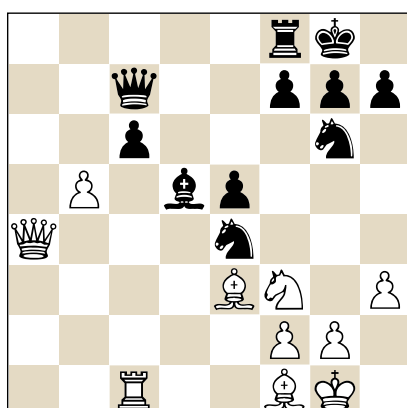
Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
New York 2016 (tiebreak-2)
Giuoco Piano

This was the second rapid tiebreak game, with the players having 25 minutes plus a 10-second increment per move.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.0-0 ♗f6 5.d3 0-0 6.a4 a6 7.c3 d6 8.♖e1 ♙a7 9.h3 ♗e7 10.d4 ♗g6 11.♗bd2 c6 12.♙f1 a5



13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♙c2 ♙e6 15.♗c4 ♙c7 16.b4 axb4 17.cxb4 b5 18.♗e3 bxa4 19.♖xa4 ♙xe3 20.♙xe3 ♖xa4 21.♙xa4 ♗xe4 22.♖c1 ♙d5 23.b5

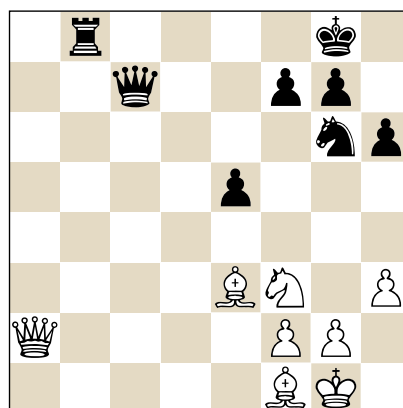


Karjakin has ended up under some pressure here. When it came to

the openings in this match, as a rule Magnus showed a better understanding of this important phase of the game. On top of that Karjakin generally used up much more time in this phase.

23...cxb5? As he was down on time here too, it was understandable that Sergey was looking for this sort of 'easy' solution. But as the queens are still on the board, this move is really bad. The mighty white bishops should really be able to do the job.

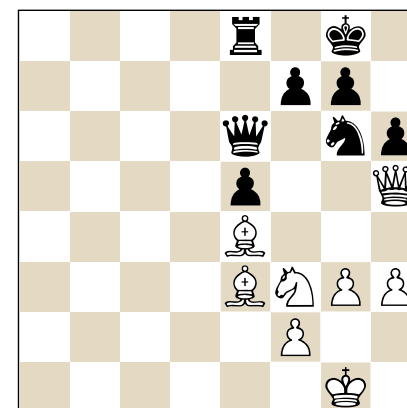
24.♙xe4 ♙xc1 25.♙xd5 ♙c7 26.♙xb5 ♖b8 27.♙d5 ♖d8 28.♙b3 ♖b8 29.♙a2 h6



Black is of course very solid, but White should eventually build up a strong attack here. To me it was clear, since Magnus is not really going to blunder something big, that the only chance for Black is that White will make the mistake of trading queens at some point.

30.♙d5 ♙e7 31.♙e4 ♙f6 32.g3

♖c8 33.♙d3 ♙c6 34.♙f5 ♖e8 35.♙e4 ♙e6 36.♙h5



Already when Magnus spent some time here, I started having doubts. Still, I got tricked into a bet with my wife, me choosing 1-0, which eventually led to the historic moment of her first win in our betting history.

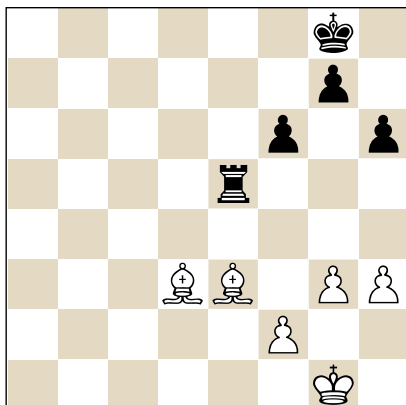
36...♗e7 37.♙xe5? Going into an endgame, even while winning a pawn, is a very bad call. Now Black has real chances of a fortress.

37.♗g5! is apparently just killing. But even if you don't see anything clear, still it would have been a better to keep the queens on.

37...♙xe5 38.♗xe5 ♗g6 Forcing what should be a theoretical endgame. As far as I know it has not been analysed extensively, although I could be wrong, as chess history is full of passionate freaks ready to analyse anything till the end.

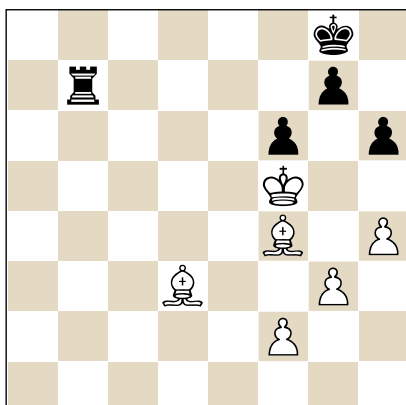


39. ♖xg6 ♜xe5 40. ♙d3 f6

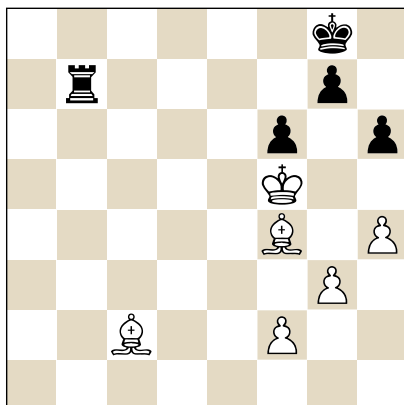


Watching the game together with Grandmaster L'Ami, we thought that this is a very decent pawn set-up for Black. That said, now White has a clear plan of getting his king to g6 and Carlsen manages to execute it.

41. ♖g2 ♙h8 42. ♖f3 ♜d5 43. ♙g6 ♜a5 44. ♖e4 ♜b5 45. h4 ♜e5+ 46. ♖d4 ♜a5 47. ♖c4 ♜e5 48. ♙d4 ♜a5 49. ♙c5 ♖g8 50. ♖d5 ♜b5 51. ♖d6 ♜a5 52. ♙e3 ♜e5 53. ♙f4 ♜a5 54. ♙d3 ♜a7 55. ♖e6 ♜b7 56. ♖f5



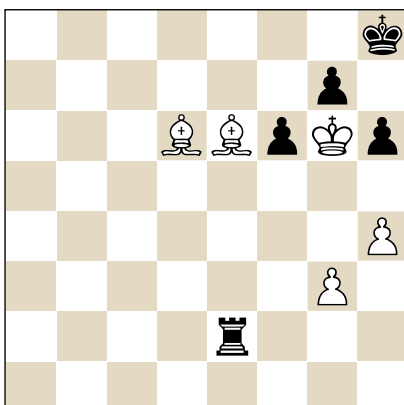
Sergey probably could have defended better, as the white king got really close to g6. Now Black has a choice to either go 56... ♖h7 (but then perhaps ♖g4-♖h5-♖g6) or try and defend against 57. ♖g6 for now by tactical means. 56... ♜d7 57. ♙c2 ♜b7



58. ♖g6!

Objectively speaking this pawn sacrifice wins, but seeing what happened later, one gets the impression that White just blundered a pawn.

58... ♜b2 59. ♙f5 ♜xf2 60. ♙e6+ ♖h8 61. ♙d6 ♜e2

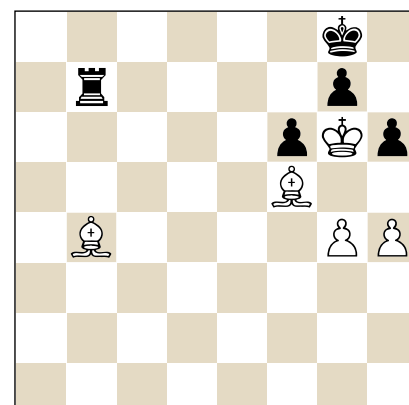


62. ♙g4??

62. ♖f7 wins quite straightforwardly, but I have the feeling that Magnus missed the idea of ♙f7. Further on, he also missed one such chance: 62... ♜b2 63. ♙f8 ♜b7+ 64. ♖g6!, followed by 65. ♙f7! and curtains.

62... ♜e8 63. ♙f5 ♖g8 64. ♙c2 ♜e3 65. ♙b1 ♖h8 66. ♖f7 ♜b3 67. ♙e4 ♜e3 68. ♙f5 ♜c3 69. g4 ♜c6 70. ♙f8 ♜c7+ 71. ♖g6 ♖g8 72. ♙b4 ♜b7??

Perfect defence so far, but now one slip happens, perhaps due to some time-trouble panic.



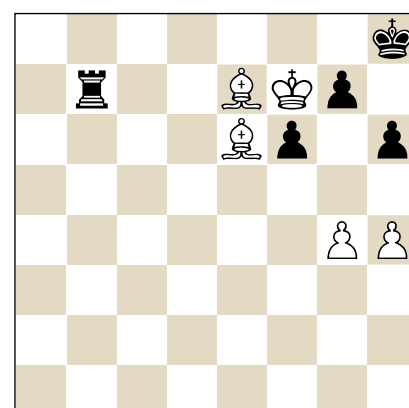
73. ♙d6?? I was shouting like a madman, but being an ocean apart, Magnus couldn't hear me.

73. ♙e6+ ♖h8 74. ♙f8 is the winning set-up, once again followed by 75. ♙f7.

73... ♖h8? 73... ♜b6! 74. ♙f8 ♖g8 75. ♙a3 75. ♙c5!! would still win miraculously.

75... ♖h8! And now Sergey already understood exactly how to do it.

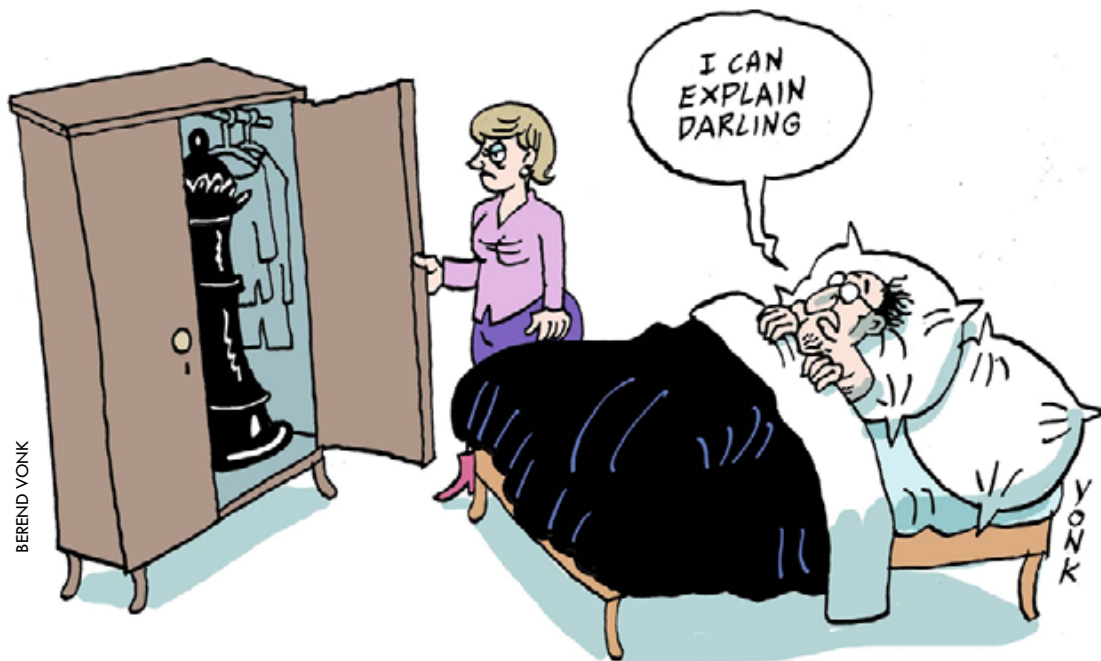
76. ♙e6 ♜b6 77. ♖f7 ♜b7+ 78. ♙e7



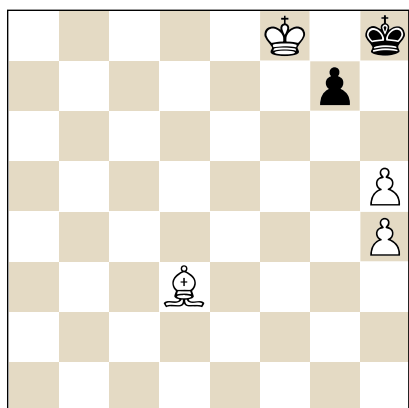
78... h5!

This forces the draw.

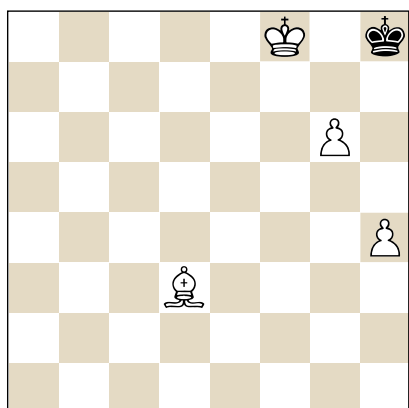
79. gxf5 f5 80. ♙xf5 ♜xe7+



81. ♔xe7 ♔g8 82. ♕d3 ♔h8
83. ♕f8



83...g5 84.hxg6



Draw.

Another historic defensive effort by Sergey. You would think that Magnus would now enter a state of tilt, which happened to him more than once in the past, especially in rapid or blitz events, but it seems that this time he took his pills. This information has obviously not been verified and could be interpreted as a joke.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
New York 2016 (tiebreak-3)
Ruy Lopez, Morphy Defence

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕b5 a6
4. ♕a4 ♘f6 5. 0-0 ♕e7 6. d3 b5
7. ♕b3 d6 8. a3 0-0 9. ♘c3 ♘a5
10. ♕a2 ♕e6 11. b4

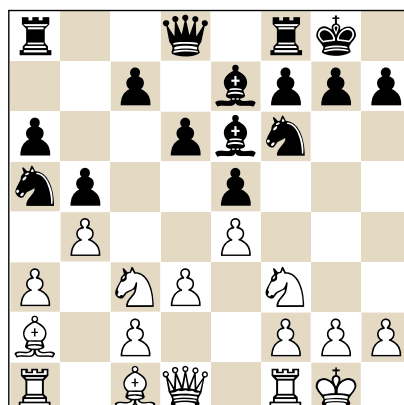
11... ♘c6!? More common is the simplifying 11... ♕xa2, in the style of Levon Aronian, who played this way a couple of times.

12. ♘d5 ♘d4 13. ♘g5!?

Interesting and strategically very double-edged.

13... ♕xd5 14. exd5 ♘d7 15. ♘e4
15. ♘h3 looks very clever, preventing ...f5, but of course Black can't be doing badly once you make a move like this.

15...f5



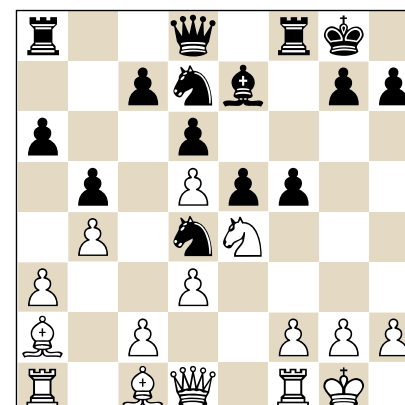
16. ♘d2

Here 16.c3!? was the way to get a good position without any risk: 16...fxe4 17.cxd4 exd3 18.dxe5 ♘xe5 19. ♕b1 followed by ♖a2 and f4, picking up the d3-pawn while maintaining the bishop pair.

16...f4 17.c3 ♘f5 18. ♘e4?!

At this moment 18. ♖e1! is more flexible and stronger. The knight might very well go to f3. Now 18... ♕e8 is met with 19.d4!

18... ♕e8!



MARIA EMELIANOVA

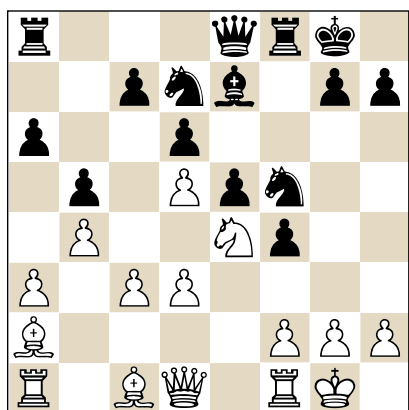


Tiebreak-2: Another historic defensive effort by Sergey.



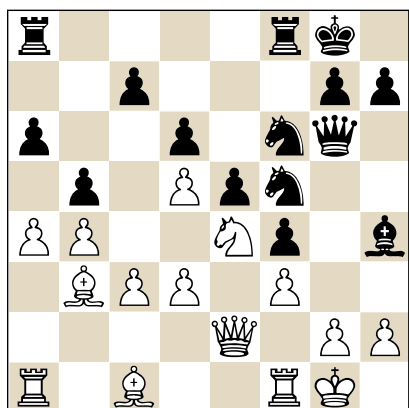
Magnus Carlsen celebrating his 26th birthday.

LENNART OOTES



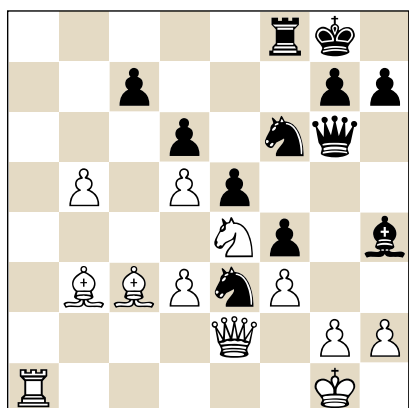
From this moment on, Black is in the driver's seat.

19. ♖b3 ♜g6 20. f3 ♘h4 21. a4 ♜f6 22. ♜e2 It was maybe better to trade on b5 and a8 first, but it wasn't easy to foresee Black's next.



22...a5! Mate on the kingside wasn't that easy to achieve for Black, even though placing a bishop or a knight on g3 seemed like a tempting idea at some point. Carlsen shifts to positional play.

23. axb5 axb4 24. ♘d2 bxc3 25. ♘xc3 ♜e3 26. ♜fc1 ♜xa1 27. ♜xa1



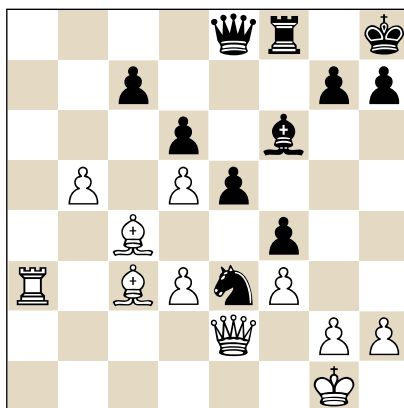
27...♜e8!

Very strong. On top of other issues White now also has to worry about the ...♜b8-b6 manoeuvre.

28. ♘c4 ♜h8! 29. ♜xf6 It was hard to protect the d5-pawn. **29... ♘xf6!?** Everybody was shocked, including Rustam Kasimdzhanov himself, if we were to believe Fabiano Caruana, but Magnus sets up a very pretty positional pawn sacrifice.

29...gxf6 doesn't mate in view of 30. ♘d2, but with the knight coming to d4, this was a nice way to play as well: 30...♜c2 31. ♜a2 ♜d4 32. ♜d1.

30. ♜a3

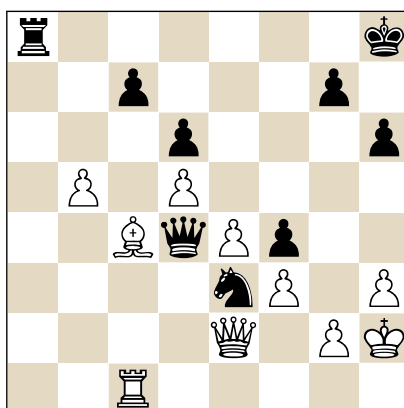


30...e4! 31. dxe4 ♘xc3 32. ♜xc3 ♜e5! And this gorgeous position is not even objectively better for Black, but this is one of those moments when as an annotator you have to get yourself together, overrule AI and just claim that Black is dominating.

33. ♜c1 ♜a8 34. h3

34. ♜d2! was a strong move, guarding the d4 square. Black actually has no way to crack White here, though he can always try.

34...h6 35. ♜h2?! ♜d4!

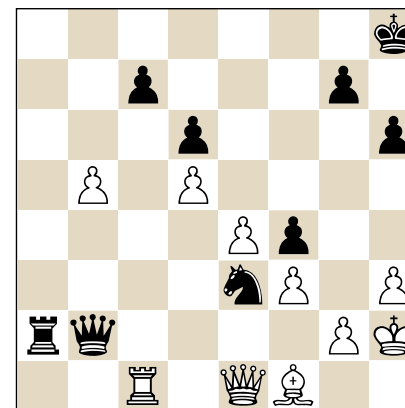


36. ♜e1? This gives away more ground. Instead, 36.e5!? ♜xe5 37. ♘d3 was a nice defensive idea. 36. ♘a2, just waiting, is the passive way to do it, but it is getting really ugly.

36...♜b2! 37. ♘f1?

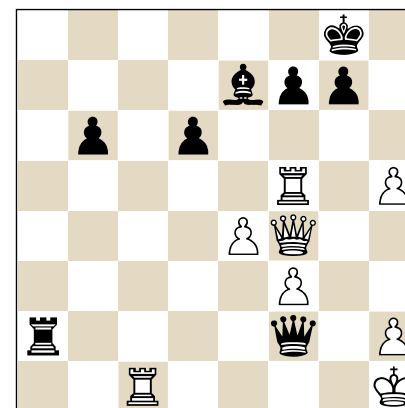
37. ♘e2! was the only way: 37...♜a2 38.e5! ♜xe5 39.b6!, but especially with the seconds ticking down such lines are not exactly easy to find.

37...♜a2



38. ♜xc7? A rare occurrence, Sergey just collapses. I thought 38. ♜b1 was still OK, but that's not exactly the case. Still, it was the only move, when Black continues 38...♜f6.

38...♜a1 White resigned. Ouch! A comeback after this against an inspired Magnus Carlsen in the fourth and last rapid game was not likely to happen and it didn't.



Carlsen - Karjakin

New York 2016 (tiebreak-4)
position after 48...♜f2

And this is how the fourth rapid game ended. Magnus had managed to control the game from the very beginning to the end and now he finds a brilliant way to win the whole thing in style:

49. ♜c8+ ♜h7 50. ♜h6+!!

And with this move all his sins were forgotten and forgiven. For now. Bravo! ■



In the summer of 2003, I was invited, unexpectedly and at rather short notice, to play a secret training match, in Yalta, against Ruslan Ponomarev, as provision for his forthcoming encounter with Garry Kasparov – a supposedly integral part of the reunification process known as the Prague Agreement. The detailed history as to why this latter match collapsed – ostensibly because Ruslan failed to sign the contract in time – has yet to be written. The one thing I do know, though, is that the rude and ignorant pundits who sneered that Ruslan was afraid to meet the mighty Russian were deeply mistaken. He played at least three classified matches in the run-up to that aborted event. No person goes to such elaborate

while there were certain advantages to the onlookers being deceased, the same cannot be said of having a leaky roof – as became apparent when rain stopped play during the first game. Being July, the weather was pleasantly warm but, due to the climatic conditions in that area, sudden, sometimes heavy showers were a quotidian, postprandial occurrence. Alas, while we couldn't avoid the daily drip, or rather pour, by strategically re-positioning the table, we ensured that the precipitation no longer fell directly on the pieces, or flooded the board.

Meteorological circumstances aside, the purely chess start of the match also went badly awry. For some time I had been meaning to broaden my repertoire with

SECRET YALTA CONFERENCE

preparatory lengths unless he intends to proceed. I suspect that inexperience and political naivety was the more likely cause of the negotiational failure.

It was difficult, psychologically, to emerge from the benign torpor of a Peloponnesian village vacation, to the keen competitiveness of a head-to-head with the reigning FIDE World Champion. The Ukrainian had been in training for months, whereas for weeks I had done nothing but laze indolently upon the beach and the beloved garden swing. Nevertheless, I felt honoured to be considered a worthy sparring partner, and was determined to do my best in demanding circumstances.

The venue for our clandestine clash was a comfortable mountain holiday camp outside of the brash, but lively Crimean coastal town. With distant views of the Black Sea, it was a suitably tranquil location for mental exertion. Thanks to some sponsorship, Ruslan had already been installed in this idyllic setting for a lengthy period. As part of his daily exercise drill, the teenager would walk in the steep forests and on the hills where his youthful adventurousness would occasionally get the better of him: when he greeted me upon arrival, I was shocked and distressed to find his flesh torn to shreds in several places by a recent nasty brush with brambles.

I have played in some pretty weird locales over the years, but the hunting lodge where these eight furtive battles took place was, without doubt, the most bizarre I have ever experienced. For spectators, we had a deranged taxidermist's assemblage of stuffed wildlife – eagles, bears, wolves, you name it. And

Black, and to that end I had squeezed in a few days analysis of the Tarrasch Defence with my friend Stelios Halkias, which I then handled with the dexterity of a virgin encountering a bra-clasp. Never mind – there was still plenty of time to recover from this set-back.

The second game was a Breyer of little incident. Perhaps White had a slight advantage at some point, but this was quite insufficient to overcome the defensive technique of my opponent. I normally require an extra rook before feeling confident of converting. Strangely, this quiet manoeuvring affair turned out to be the solitary draw in the otherwise brutal slugfest.

The third was a 5. ♕f4 Queen's Gambit Declined. I was doing fine for quite a while, but overlooked a tactical motif before the time-control, which allowed him to make a powerful exchange sacrifice. Soon afterwards I resigned in a demoralised state – prematurely as it turned out, as sober analysis revealed the endgame to be merely extremely unpleasant, rather than hopelessly lost.

Training matches rarely replicate the solemnity or intensity of the genuine article. With little at stake, rash decisions can be made. Any Spanish player knows he should never enter the Marshall, unless armed to the teeth, but in the 4th game, I found myself suicidally curious to see Ruslan's preparation. Disinclined to bail out into one of the various safe, but tedious, lines, I improvised some nonsense and was deservedly butchered.

Trailing by 3½-½ at the half-way mark, it appeared the only thing remaining was the administration of

the last rites. But now the match took a strange turn. The next game – another Queen’s Gambit – began pacifically, but for some inexplicable reason, given his dominance thus far, Ruslan was twitching with nerves. One imprecision followed another and suddenly he collapsed, without me needing to exert any significant pressure.

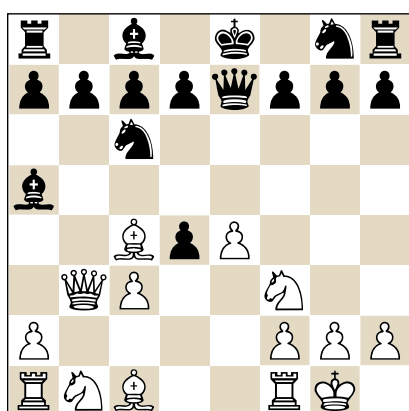
With this unexpected victory, I

‘While there were certain advantages to the onlookers being deceased, the same cannot be said of having a leaky roof.’

sensed an opportunity to bounce back. Perhaps I could shake him with some dusty, neglected, museum-artefact of an opening?

Nigel Short
Ruslan Ponomarev
 Yalta 2003 (6)
 Evans Gambit

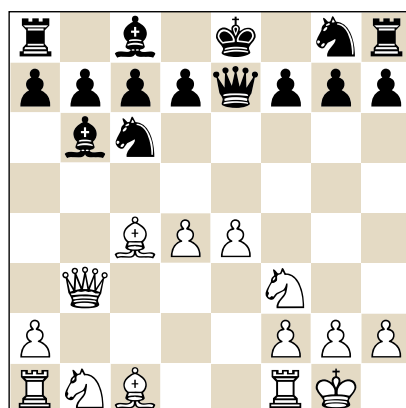
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4!? In homage to my partly Welsh ancestry.
4...♙xb4 5.c3 ♙a5 6.d4 exd4 7.♙b3 ♙e7 8.0-0



8...♙b6

Undoubtedly superior to 8...h6? played by the hapless chess aristocrat, the Duke of Brunswick, against Harrwitz, in Paris 1857.

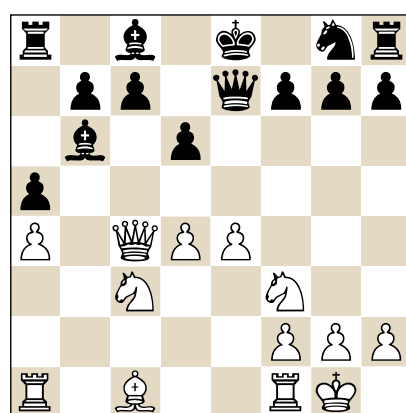
9.cxd4



9...♘a5 One of those occasions where the supposedly ‘safe’ move is probably more dangerous than the greedy alternative 9...♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♙xd4 11.♘c3, which is objectively fine for Black, although, even here, White’s practical results have been favourable.

10.♙a4 ♘xc4 11.♙xc4 d6 12.a4 a5 12...c6 13.♘c3 ♙d8 14.a5 ♙xa5 15.♙g5 led to murky complications in Sutovsky-Smagin, Essen 2001 (1-0, 42).

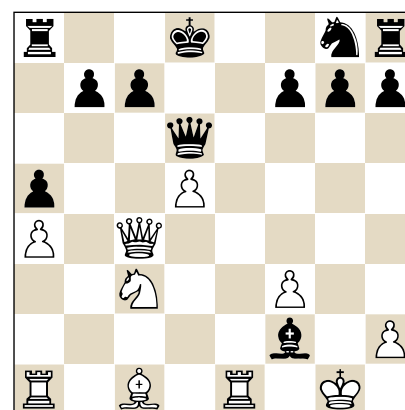
13.♘c3 White’s initiative is already menacing.



13...♙e6 14.d5 ♙g4 15.e5! ♙xf3 16.exd6 ♙xd6 17.♙e1+ ♙d8 18.gxf3

After two sharp zwischenzugs, the black king is caught in the centre and he lags in development. To be sure, it is objectively unpleasant, and even more so practically, but the next move is just utter capitulation.

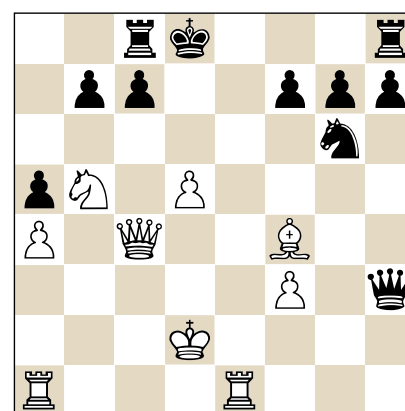
18...♙xf2+?



It is fascinating how poorly even very strong players can play when they have completely lost their bearings. Three pawns and a few checks is no compensation for a piece when the attack will be resumed imminently.

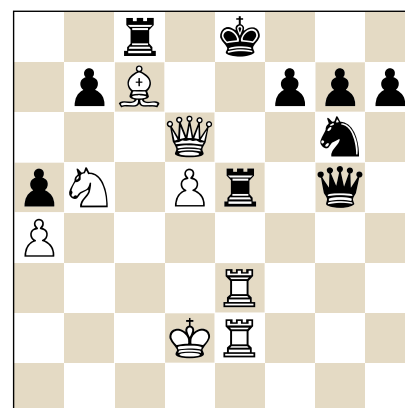
18...♙b4! was the only way to keep Black in the game.

19.♙xf2 ♙xh2+ 20.♙f1 ♙h3+ 21.♙e2 ♘e7 22.♙f4 ♙c8 23.♙d2 ♘g6 24.♙b5

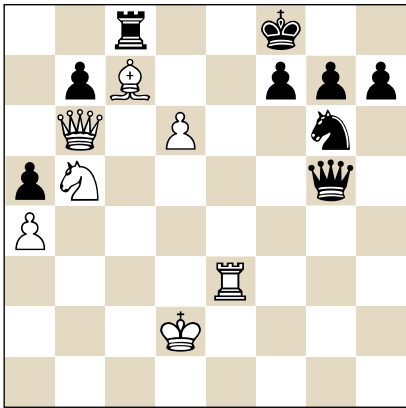


The storming recommences. Black’s position is beyond hope.

24...♙xf3 25.♙xc7+ ♙d7 26.♙a3 ♙g2+ 27.♙e2 ♙g5+ 28.♙ae3 ♙he8 29.♙c5 ♙e5 30.♙d6+ ♙e8



31. ♖b6
31. ♘a7! ♜a8 32. ♘c6 was the prettiest and fastest way to end the game, but the text doesn't spoil anything.
31... ♜xe3 32. ♜xe3+ ♚f8 33.d6



33... ♚f5
33... ♜e8 was the only remaining hope, but White wins anyway after 34.d7 ♚g2+ 35.♚d3! ♚f1+ 36.♚d4!

♚d1+ 37.♚c5! ♚xd7 38.♚d6+.
34. ♚xb7 ♚g8 35. ♘d4 ♚g4
36. ♚e4 ♚d7 37. ♚c6 ♘f8
38. ♚xd7 ♘xd7 39. ♜e7 ♘f6
40.d7 Black resigned.

In the next game, to my dismay, I soon fell under what should have been a devastating attack. But then Ruslan botched the execution, and I found myself a knight up in a clearly advantageous position. Alas, my dream of a fairy-tale finish was not to be. Defending is invariably tricky, even with more material, and I faltered, succumbing quickly.

The match was decided, but there was still a final confrontation – one last hurrah. I couldn't possibly beat the reigning World Champion with the antiquated Evans Gambit again, could I? The day began inauspiciously when I awoke with a painful trapped nerve in my right elbow. I even had to be helped into my jacket and could only write with my left hand. What followed, however, was one of the most chaotic, thrilling, ingenious, blunderful games of my entire career. Pieces perished in an orgiastic hecatomb. Ruslan kept his head to rebuff the furious sacrificial

assault, only to yield in a deeply subtle endgame. I would love to annotate it one day, and no doubt I will, on the pages of this magazine. ■

Yalta 2003									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Ruslan Ponomarev	1	½	1	1	0	0	1	0	4½
Nigel Short	0	½	0	0	1	1	0	1	3½

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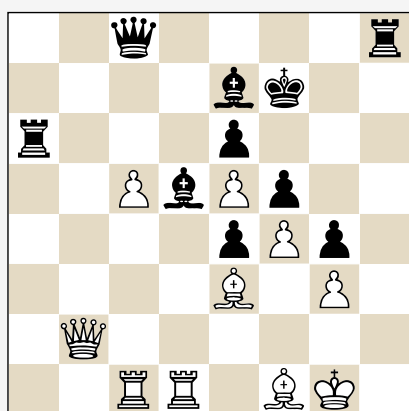
MAXIMIZE your Tactics

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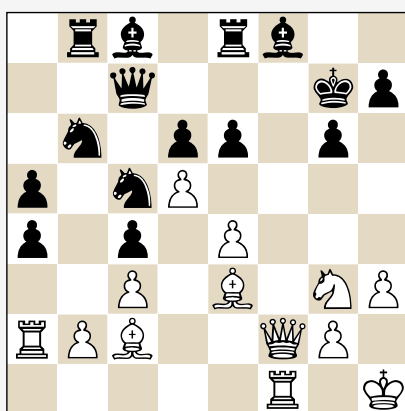


Find the best move in the positions below

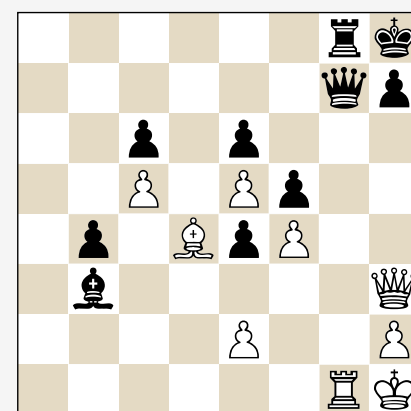
Solutions on page 65



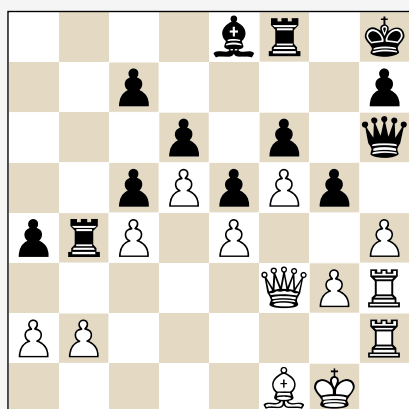
1. Black to play



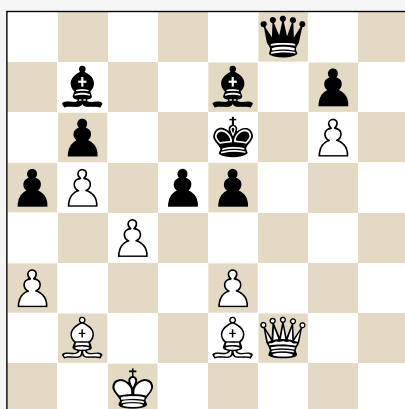
2. White to play



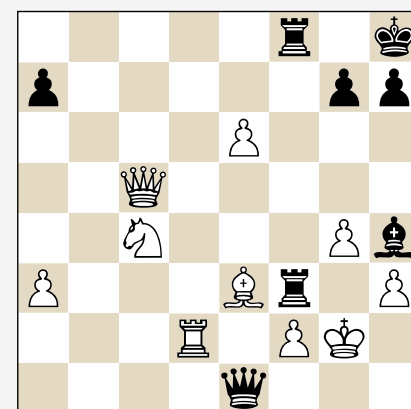
3. Black to play



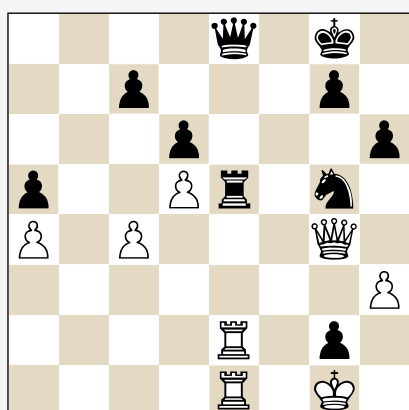
4. Black to play



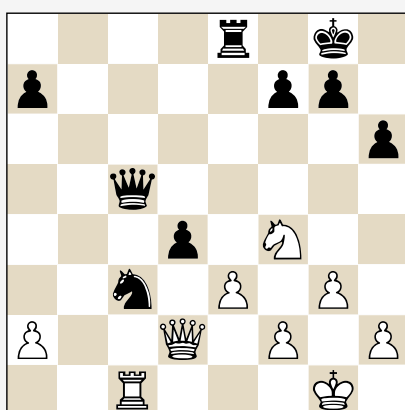
5. White to play



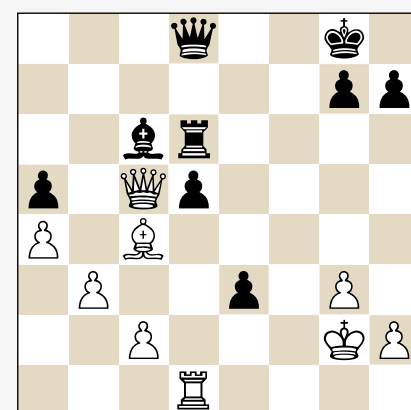
6. Black to play



7. Black to play



8. Black to play



9. White to play

Sometimes, GMs just want to have fun

Vishy Anand in great form in Champions Showdown

Vishy Anand was on a roll in St. Louis. His main rival was Hikaru Nakamura, but after he



One of the fine traditions of the Saint Louis Chess Club is a slightly unusual event in November involving some of the best chess players in the world. The Champions Showdown pitted two former World Champions against the two leading

American GMs. **ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ** enjoyed the action and saw that Vishy Anand is not only one of the living legends of the game, but also remains one of the best and most inspiring players around.



CC AND SC OF SAINT LOUIS / AUSTIN FULLER

outplayed the American in Round 4, the former World Champion took the lead, which he never relinquished.

In the past few years we've seen many types of events in November, as well as many names. The one thing they have in common, as the Executive Director of the club, Tony Rich, said, is that they are more of an experimental and fun nature than, say, the Sinquefeld Cup. Last year's edition was named 'Showdown in Saint Louis', and it had two matches, one between Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura and one between Hou Yifan and Parimarjan Negi. The games involved rapid, blitz, and the inclusion of the interesting and dynamic Basque system. The year before, Hikaru had faced off against Levon Aronian in a combination of fast time-controls and Chess960. This year's format was much more classical, but brought a very interesting twist to

it. Instead of matches, we had a series of round-robin tournaments between Hikaru Nakamura, Fabiano Caruana, and two of the strongest of the old guard: Veselin Topalov and Viswanathan Anand. The players would face off first in a three-day round-robin of 'classical' chess, a day of two round-robins of rapid, and then it would be all up for grabs in four round-robins of blitz events. The twist came in the time-controls: the 'classical' (and I have to use quotation marks when referring to this time format, as it is very far from a standard classical game) was played on 60 minutes per player for the game, with a five-second delay, the rapid on 15 minutes per player for the game, with a five-second delay, and the blitz on three minutes per player for the game, with a two-second delay.

As a good part of the audience of New In Chess is non-American, I feel compelled to explain what on earth 'delay' is. If you aren't from America, it is highly likely that you have never heard of this system and have never played with it. Don't feel bad about that, though: a day before the tournament started Vishy Anand assumed that 'delay' was a typo and they meant increment, while Topalov had to be told how delay worked at the player's meeting. Delay is a popular time system in American Swiss tournaments, in which your clock doesn't start running after your opponent presses it for a set amount of seconds, known as the delay. For example, in the rapid, the clocks wouldn't start until five seconds after a player had pressed the clock. This means that in the case of rook and

king vs. king you have ample time to mate your opponent, even if the clock shows one second, but it also means that you cannot accumulate time, as with increments. It is impossible to make a few quick moves to gain time. This difference might seem slight, but it actually accelerates the pace of the game considerably, not to mention that it is uncomfortable for the players to not exactly know when their time will start. Some American clocks show the delay counting down, some don't, and the ones used in the Champions Showdown did not. The

A 'classical' game was worth exactly the same as a blitz game. Whether this was experimentation or oversight is unclear.

event, as usual for the November showdowns, was not rated, which in my opinion allowed relatively more carefree games as well.

A minor point before I begin the journey through the tournament is that the games weren't weighted. That means that a 'classical' game was worth exactly the same as a blitz game. Whether this was experimentation or oversight is unclear, but it wasn't very popular with the players or the commentators. It was only a minor point because we shall see later that it had virtually no impact on the final standings.

The first three days comprised 60 per cent of the playing time, but only accounted for 25 per cent of the points in play. It was certainly a pleasure to see the players let go a bit and try different openings, crazy attacks and some intuitive sacrifices. Including Veselin Topalov in the mix paid off from the very first round.

Veselin Topalov
Fabiano Caruana

St. Louis 2016 60-minutes (1)

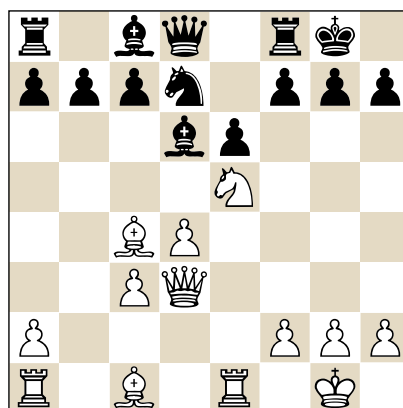
Queen's Gambit Accepted,
Vienna Variation

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.e4 ♙b4 6.♙xc4 ♘xe4

This variation of the Vienna certainly deserves more attention. Caruana comes with a new twist on the whole thing.

7.0-0 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♙d6 Exceptionally rare, but not necessarily bad. It's been employed in some grandmaster games, but certainly **8...♙e7** is by far the most popular move.

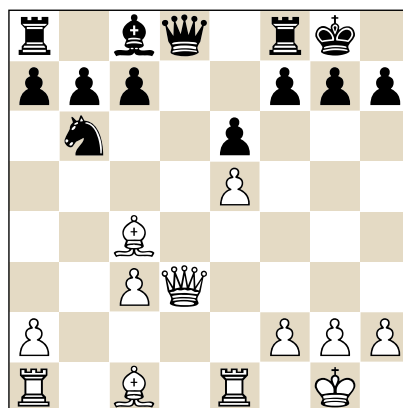
9.♖e1 0-0 10.♔d3 ♘d7 11.♗e5!?



This standard move is actually very committal in this position.

11...♙xe5 12.dxe5 ♘b6

The refutation of White's moves. The first player can't afford to trade pieces, as he will simply be down a pawn. Topalov thought for a very short time, and pulled the trigger.

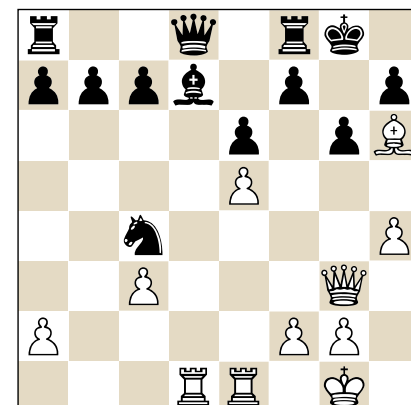


13.♔g3 White sacrifices the bishop on c4, but who needs a light-squared pointy dude when the attack is completely based on the dark-square

weaknesses? **13.♔e2 ♘xc4 14.♔xc4 b6** is just bad.

13...♘xc4 Forced, clearly.

14.♙h6 g6 15.♖ad1 ♙d7 16.h4

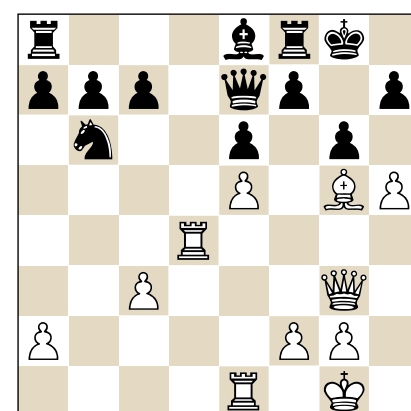


The fact that Topalov uses such a slow, methodical attack shows how permanent the dark-square problems are.

16...♘b6 17.h5 ♔e7 18.♖d4 ♙e8?! The computer has trouble finding a productive plan, but putting the bishop back on e8, though logical, as it defends g6, severely reduces Black's possibilities.

18...♙c6 19.♙g5 ♔c5 20.♔h4, and your computer will scream that Black's totally winning... but let it run for a while longer!

19.♙g5!

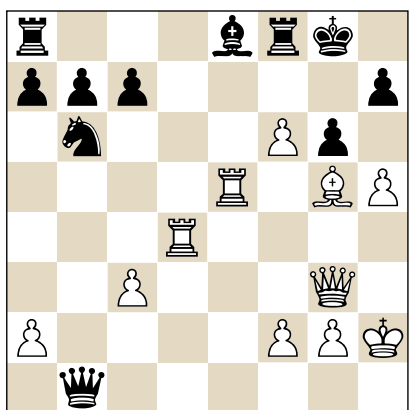


19...f6? **19...♔c5 20.♔h4 f6 21.exf6 gxf5** was far, far better.

20.exf6 ♔c5 20...♖xf6 21.♔h4 ♘d7 22.hxg6 ♙xg6 23.♖ed1 regains all material for White, and much, much more.

21.♖xe6 Black's already losing. His coordination does not allow him to parry the threats on the seventh rank, the dark squares, and the frontal assault.

21...♔f5 22.♖e5 ♔b1+ 23.♔h2



23...gxh5 Suicidal, but Fabi was running low on time and, honestly, there wasn't much to suggest for him.
24. ♖h6+ ♗g6 25. ♗xf8 ♜xf8 26. ♖g5 ♖xa2 27. ♜e7 ♖xf2 28. ♜g7+ ♔h8 29. ♜xg6
 Black resigned.

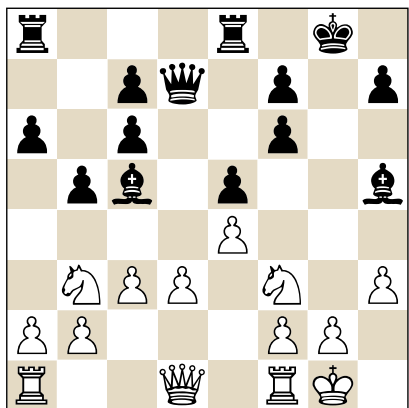


Already in Round 2 it was clear that the players were completely unaccustomed to the delay, and that modifications needed to be made to time management for them to convert winning positions or defend tough endgames. The game between Caruana and Nakamura had a weird finish to what was otherwise a fabulous game.

Fabiano Caruana
Hikaru Nakamura

St. Louis 2016 60-minutes (2)
 Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 ♗f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 ♜e8 7. ♗bd2 a6 8. ♗xc6 dxc6 9. ♗c4 ♗g4 10.h3 ♗h5 11. ♗g5 b5 12. ♗a5 ♖d7 13. ♗xf6 gxf6 14. ♗b3



Caruana's idea, trying to refute what Hikaru did against MVL earlier in the year in the Leuven blitz.

14... ♗b6 15.c4 c5 16.g4 ♗g6 17. ♖e2 ♜ad8 18. ♜ad1 ♜e6 19. ♘c1

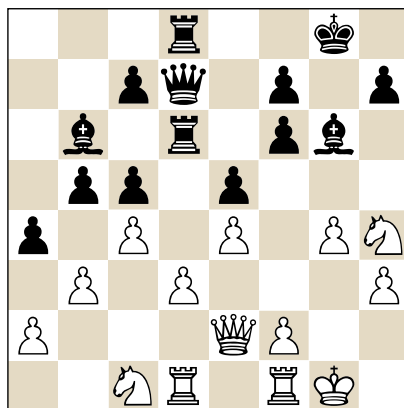
White's idea is clear: he wants to somehow bury both Black's bishops and then manoeuvre his knights to f5. Black, in the meantime, has a huge amount of pressure on d3, which allows him to control the game, at least for a few more moves.

19... ♜d6 20.b3 a5?!

Without going into detail, this move simply cannot be correct.

20... ♗a5, with the idea of transferring the bishop to d4 on a good day, or maybe even a3 to pressure d3, is more logical.

21. ♘h4 a4



22. ♔h2!?

White goes for mate! The idea is not subtle, but it is strong: put a knight on f5, force the opening of the kingside and checkmate your opponent.

22... ♗a5 23. ♖e3!?

Not only attacking c5, but the possibility of ♖h6 can be lethal.

23... bxc4 24. bxc4

24. ♖h6 ♖e7 is not lethal yet.

24... ♗f8 25. ♗g2!?

Transferring the knight to e3.

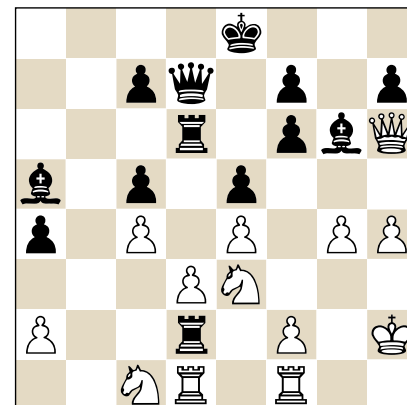
25. ♖xc5 ♗b6 seems like a pawn that White will choke on; there is simply no good reason to activate the dark-squared bishop.

25... ♜b8 26. ♖h6+ ♔e8 27. ♗e3 ♜b2 28.h4

You may have wondered why White transferred his knight to e3. Well, here is the point. With the knight out

of the way, the pawn march threatens to capture the bishop on g6.

28... ♜d2



29. ♖g7!

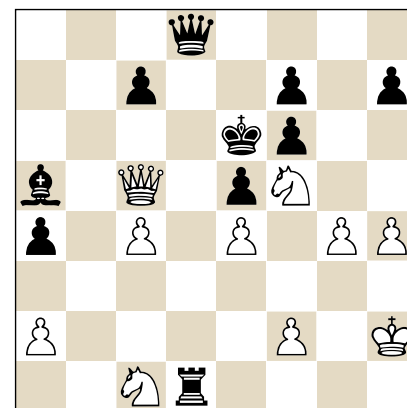
Extremely precise; a nice calculation, with the clock ticking out of time.

29.h5 ♗xe4 30. ♜xd2 ♗xd2 31.dxe4 ♗xe3 32. ♖xe3 ♖xg4 33. ♗e2! is also very good for White.

29... ♗xe4!

The exclamation mark is for letting White decide between 30.dxe4 and 30. ♜xd2, which cost him a couple of minutes that he did not have.

30.dxe4 ♜xd1 31. ♜xd1 ♜xd1 32. ♖h8+ ♔e7 33. ♗f5+ ♔e6 34. ♖f8 ♖d8 35. ♖xc5



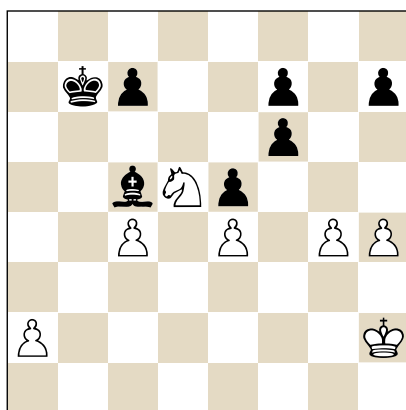
This was as far as Caruana saw, and it is sufficient. White gets the material back and more.

35... ♗b6 36. ♖c6+ 36. ♖b5!. But it's such a computer move...

36... ♜d6 37. ♗xd6 ♖xd6 38. ♖e8+ ♖e7 39. ♖xa4

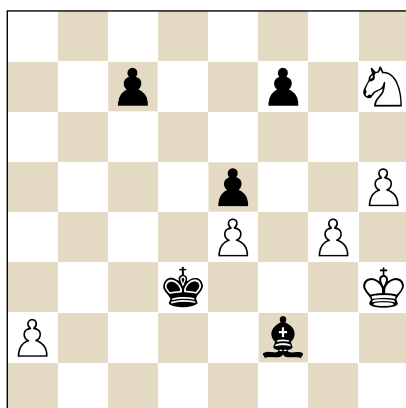
A pawn is plucked, and now most endgames are winning.

39... ♗xf2 40. ♗d3 ♗d4 41. ♗b4 ♗b6 42. ♗d5 ♖c5 43. ♖e8+ ♔d6 44. ♖e7+ ♔c6 45. ♗b4+! ♔b7 46. ♖xc5 ♗xc5 47. ♗d5



This manoeuvre gains White a few tempi in the resulting endgame. The game should be easily winning from here, but Hikaru pulls off one of many miracles of this tournament.

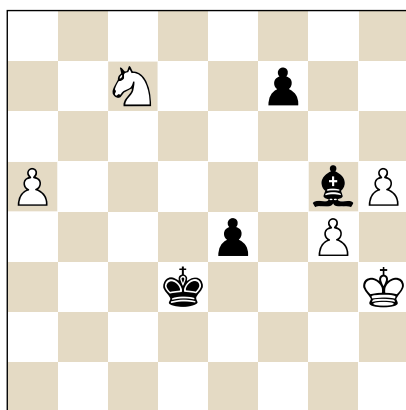
47...♙f2 48.♖h3 ♘c6 49.♗xf6 ♙c5 50.♗xh7 ♖xc4 51.h5 ♗d3



52.♗f6

52.h6 simply queens a pawn: 52...♙e3 53.g5 c5 54.♖g4 c4 55.♗f6 c3 56.♗d5, and White's knight catches the c-pawn. The same cannot be said about Black's bishop and the h-pawn.

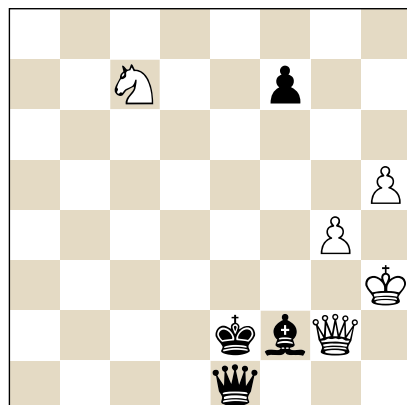
52...♙e3 53.♗d5?! ♙g5?! 54.♗xc7 ♖xe4 55.a4 ♗d3 56.a5 e4



57.a6?? 57.♗d5 is very obviously winning. Fabi can see this in five seconds, but not being used to the delay,

he kept trying to blitz out every move instead of taking his time to think.

57...e3 58.a7 e2 59.a8 ♖ e1 ♗ 60.♗d5+ ♖e2 61.♗e4+ ♙e3 62.♗g2+ ♙f2 63.♗e4+ ♙e3 64.♗g2+ ♙f2



White might be winning still, but the players decided it was enough excitement with seconds left on both clocks, and agreed on a draw.

■ ■ ■

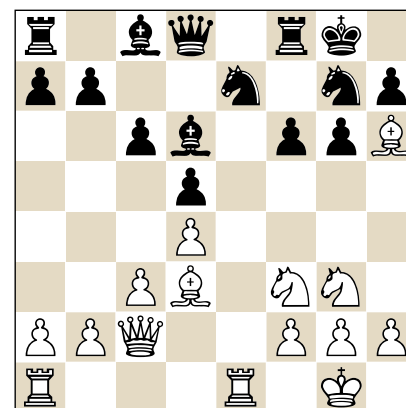
On Day 2, the players came in with more interesting ideas. Caruana was more willing to play things outside of his normal, super-solid-let's-make-a-draw-every-game-with-black repertoire. Topalov, meanwhile, had some problems remembering his openings.

Round 4 saw Anand outplay Nakamura from a dubious position, earning him the tournament lead, which he never relinquished. Nakamura bounced back with a win against Caruana, who cannot be described as 'luckless' in the first time format, as even though he let go of a few wins, he was also lucky to save some disastrous positions. He ended up at the very bottom of the standings after three days. The 'classical' ended with this nice attacking game:

Veselin Topalov
Hikaru Nakamura
 St. Louis 2016 60-minutes (6)
 Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♙b5 ♗f6 4.0-0 ♗xe4 5.♖e1 ♗d6 6.♗xe5 ♙e7 7.♙f1 ♗f5 8.♗f3 0-0 9.d4 d5 10.c3 ♙d6 11.♙d3 ♗ce7

12.♗bd2 c6 13.♖c2 g6 14.♗f1 ♗g7 15.♗g3 f6 16.♙h6

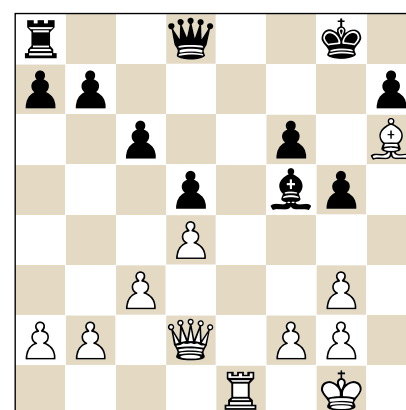


This symmetrical treatment against the Berlin has rarely been considered dangerous, but dangers lurk everywhere when you are a chess player.

16...♖e8 17.♗h4

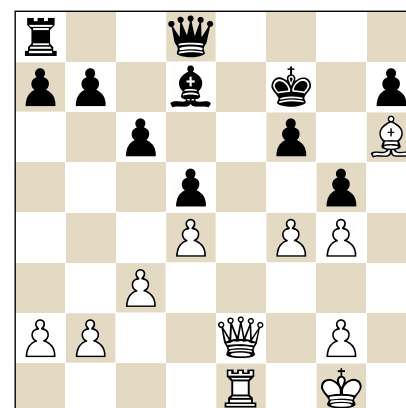
Topalov's sacrificial tendencies are neither subtle nor easy to parry.

17...♙xg3 18.hxg3 ♗ef5 19.♖d2! g5 20.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21.♖e1 ♖d8 22.♗xf5 ♗xf5 23.♙xf5 ♙xf5



White still has an initiative. The opposite-coloured bishops ramp up such positions for the attacking player, and in this case Topalov already has a choice of moves.

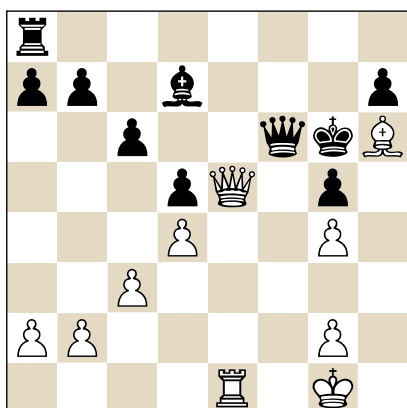
24.♖e2 24.g4 ♙xg4 25.f4 was also strong. **24...♖f7 25.g4 ♙d7 26.f4**



26...♔g6? Based on a miscalculation. 26...gxf4 27.♙xf4 ♖f8, and Nakamura said there were 'no problems' with Black's position. A bit optimistic, but certainly it should be defensible.

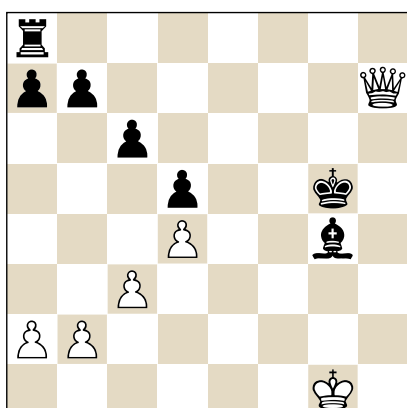
27.fxg5 fxg5 28.♖e5! ♖f6

Topalov took a long pause here, while Garry Kasparov was joining Tania Sachdev, Yasser Seirawan and me in the commentary studio. He mentioned how difficult it was to find a move like ♖h2, and that he would have to tip his hat to Topalov if he had seen it.



29.♖h2! It's not every day that you get praised by an attacking genius like Garry Kasparov, even if you are Veselin Topalov.

29...♙xg4 What else? **30.♖e5 ♙f5 31.g4 ♙xg4 32.♖xg5+ ♖xg5 33.♙xg5 ♖xg5 34.♖xh7**



Black's queenside is simply too weak. The rest is child's play.

34...b6 35.♖b7 ♖c8 36.♖xa7 b5 37.b3 ♙f4 38.♙f2 ♙f5 39.a4 bxa4 40.bxa4 ♙e4 41.a5 ♖h8 42.♖c7 ♙d3 43.a6

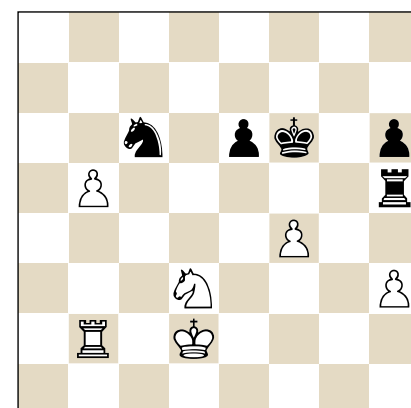
Black resigned.



'Including Veselin Topalov in the mix paid off from the very first round.'

It was clear that the players were slightly more relaxed between games than they would be at a normal top-level event. They were more willing to join dinners afterwards and stay out a bit later than they usually would when the Sinquefeld Cup is happening, but their concentration during the actual tournament was unquestionably the same. Nakamura's expressions when he lost were a clear testament to that.

The fourth day was very important for the standings. After all, the six games played with the rapid time-control would count for as much as the rest of the tournament. The pace was set very early on by Anand, as he started with wins against Nakamura and Topalov.



Anand-Nakamura

St. Louis 2016 rapid (1)
position after 49.b5

49...♙a5 Anand, as usual in this tournament, has outplayed his opponent. He is a pawn to the good for now, but his h-pawn is in peril. He wants to push his b-pawn as quickly as possible, and he thinks he has found a clever way to do so.

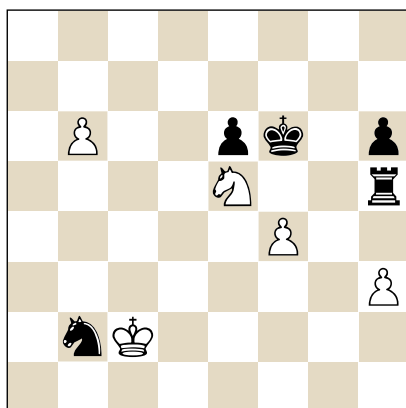
St. Louis 2016 – 60 minutes

cat. XXII

					1	2	3	4		TPR
1	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2779	* *	½ ½	½ 1	½ ½	3½	2844
2	Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2760	½ ½	* *	0 1	1 ½	3½	2850
3	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2779	½ 0	1 0	* *	½ 1	3	2787
4	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	USA	2823	½ ½	0 ½	½ 0	* *	2	2647

50.b6?! 50.♖b4 ♜xh3 51.b6 looks very dangerous for Black.

50...♗c4+ 51.♔c2 ♗xb2 52.♗e5 The 'point' of White's combination: the rook is locked out of defending against promotion and things seem hopeless for Black. However, there is a refutation that even a natural tactical genius like Nakamura was unable to spot this time around.



52...♗c4? The miracle move was 52...♗d3!!, when after 53.♗xd3? (White draws with 53.♔xd3 ♜xh3+ 54.♔c2 ♜g3 55.♗d7+ ♔f5 56.b7 ♜g8 57.b8♖ ♜xb8 58.♗xb8 ♔xf4 59.♗d2=) 53...♜b5 Black wins.

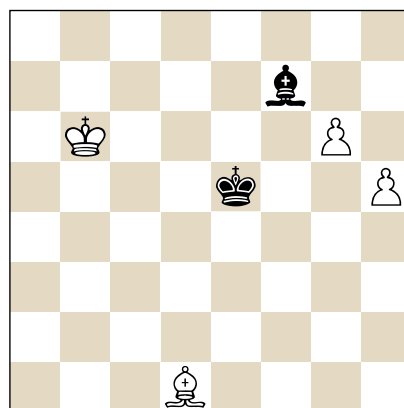
53.b7 ♗xe5 54.fxe5+ ♔f5 55.b8♖ ♜xh3 56.♔d2

And Anand eventually won.

■ ■ ■

The first rapid round-robin ended with Topalov not winning a completely dominating situation against Nakamura. Likewise, Nakamura managed a similar type of magic in his Round-4 game against Anand, this time finding himself strategically lost from the opening. Nakamura keeps being a magician, and it seemed that it didn't matter how bad his positions were; he would somehow manage to save them. Meanwhile, Caruana got his

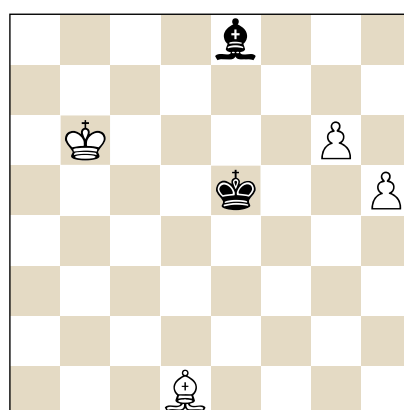
first win against Topalov in a nice positional game. He was, however, brought back down when Nakamura trounced him in the very next game. Anand continued his dominance, demolishing Topalov again. The final round of the day had Caruana drawing Anand, while miracle-worker Nakamura saved yet another game against Topalov.



Topalov-Nakamura
St. Louis 2016 rapid (6)
position after 100.g6

Around move 50 Black could have resigned with a clear conscience, as he was serious material down and had no real threats. But somehow, Nakamura managed to complicate things and by now White's material advantage has largely evaporated. However, his two connected passed pawns should still do the trick.

100...♗e8



101.h6??

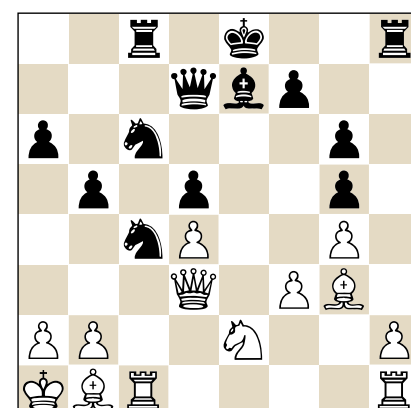
101.g7 ♗f7 102.h6 ♔f6 103.♗c2 ♗e6 104.♔c5, and the king makes its way in, as Black can never play ...♔g5.

101...♗xg6 Oops. Draw.

■ ■ ■

It was expected that the last day would be a wide-open field, with all four players still in contention for first place. After all, 50 per cent of the points were still up for grabs in the blitz games. However, more realistically, the fight was between two people: Anand and Nakamura. Anand had a 1½ point lead going into the final day, but everyone knows that Nakamura is a blitz demon, and that anything could happen. Even though mathematically it was possible for the other two players to win the event, it was clear that Caruana was completely out of form, and very unused to this delay stuff, while Topalov has been very vocal about how bad he is at blitz compared to the other players. The last day of the Champions Showdown did little to dispel that notion.

The players would face off in four round-robins. The first one saw a surprising number of draws, with the only wins being scored by Nakamura against Caruana and Topalov. This narrowed the gap at the top to half a point. Anand somehow started with four draws, something very unusual in blitz, but regained a 1½ point lead when Caruana beat Nakamura in a scintillating game, while Anand finally got lucky.



Nakamura-Caruana
St. Louis 2016 blitz (5)
position after 29.♗d3

St. Louis 2016 – rapid

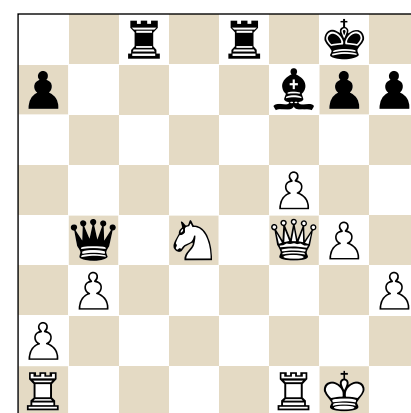
cat. XXII

					1	2	3	4		TPR
1	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2779	**	1 ½	½ ½	1 1	4 ½	2980
2	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2779	0 ½	**	1 1	½ ½	3 ½	2844
3	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	USA	2823	½ ½	0 0	**	½ 1	2 ½	2715
4	Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2760	0 0	½ ½	½ 0	**	1 ½	2600



Hikaru keeps being a magician, and it seemed that it didn't matter how bad his positions were; he would somehow manage to save them.

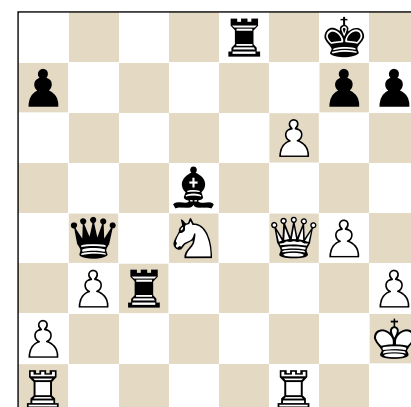
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Anand-Topalov

St. Louis 2016 blitz (5)
position after 27. ♖f4

Black has counterplay for his two missing pawns, but it might not be enough. Topalov, as usual, goes for the jugular. **27... ♖c3** **28. ♕h2??** **28. ♖ae1!** ♖xe1 **29. ♖xe1** ♖xh3 **30. ♖c1**, and White's extra pawn is still significant. **28... ♗d5?** **28... ♖ee3** leaves White defenceless against the dual rook devastation coming down on the third rank. **29. f6**

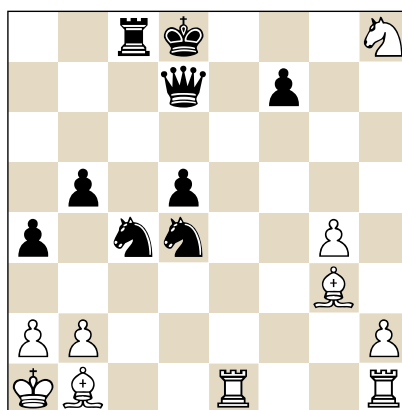


29... ♖ee3?? Last move this was winning; now it is as bad a move as can be. **30. f7+** And Black resigned, since **30... ♖f8** **31. ♗e6+** is clearly lost.

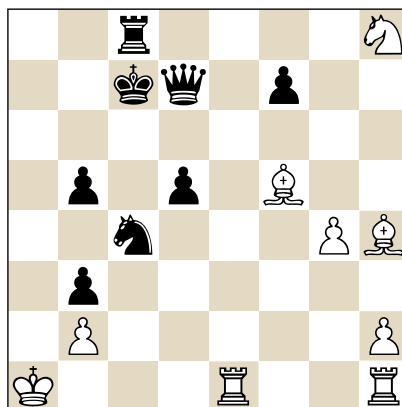
■ ■ ■

Nakamura shortened it by beating Topalov in the next round, the Bulgarian's fourth loss in a row, which finished the second of four round robins. This was the only break time the players had, as all the blitz rounds were played one after another, with only a couple of minutes in between play. Upon resuming, the very important match between Anand and Nakamura started off the fireworks, and the Indian increased his lead. The former World Champion provides the notes to that game himself.

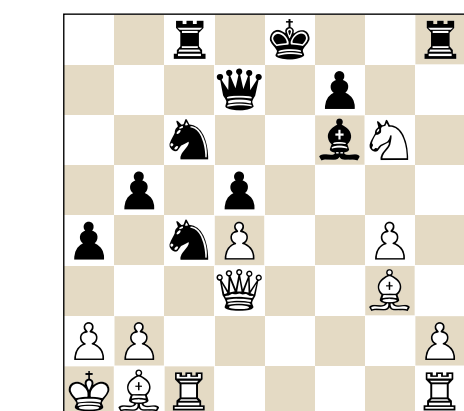
29... a5 A fascinating struggle. Both kings are quite unhappy about their position: Black has just signalled an attack with his latest move, while White will try to open avenues of attack against the black monarch stuck in the centre. **30. f4 a4** **31. fxg5 ♗xg5** **32. ♗f4 ♗f6!?** Targeting the king from the long diagonal. **33. ♗xg6!?**



36... ♗b3+!? **36... a3** was way easier, but who cares. We are here to be entertained! **37. axb3 axb3** **38. ♗h4+ ♖c7** **39. ♗f5**



39... ♗d2! What a sweet move to play in a blitz game. The queen is ignored, but the threat on the a-file is lethal now. **40. ♖c1+ ♖b6** **41. ♗f2+ d4** Forced! However, it is more than sufficient. There is no avoiding catastrophe down the a-file. White resigned.

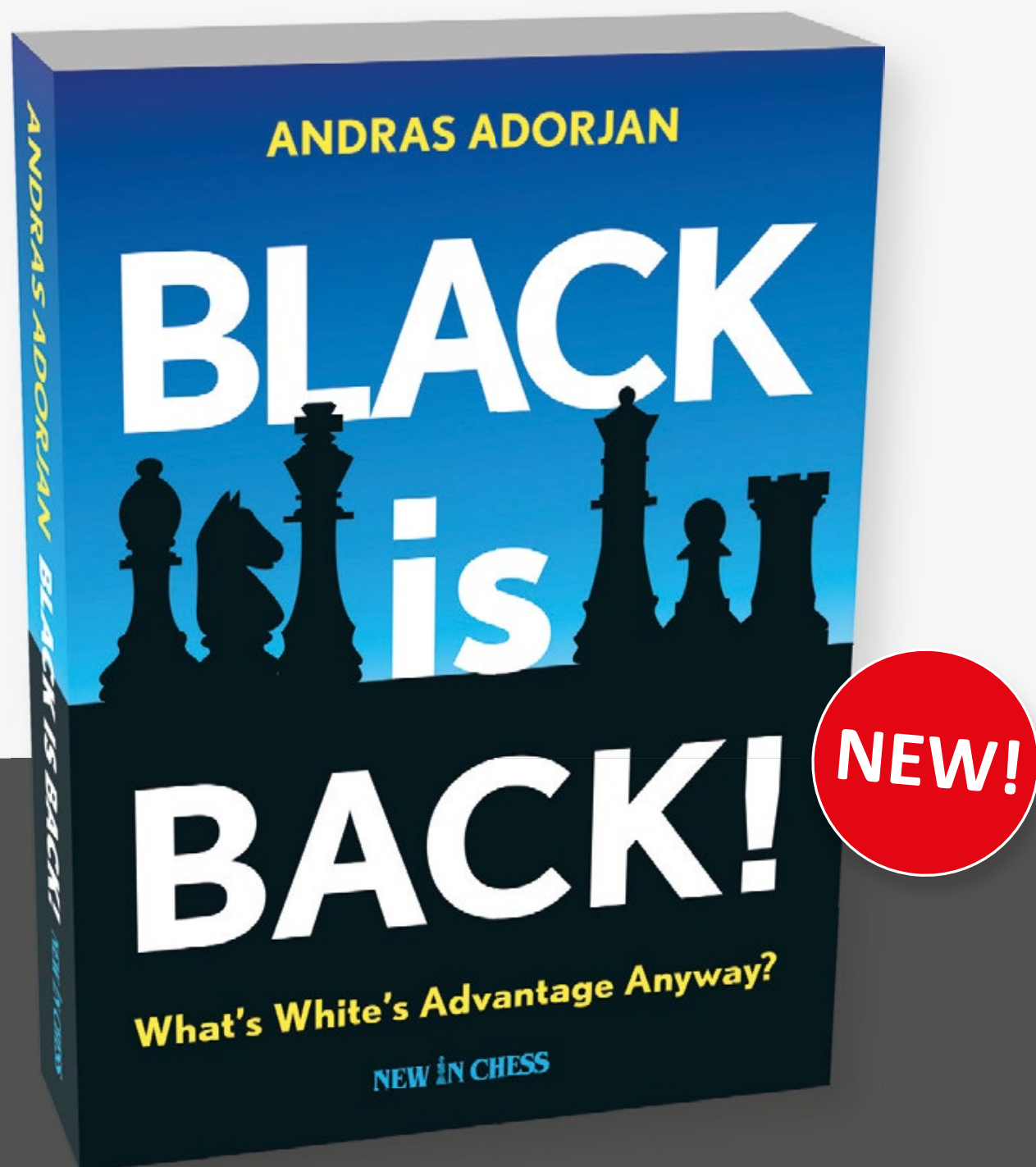


33... ♗xd4 The position after **33... fxg6** **34. ♖xg6+ ♖f7** **35. ♖hf1** is hard to assess.

34. ♖ce1+? **34. ♖xc4!** eliminates a huge black attacker: **34... bxc4** **35. ♖e2+ ♖e6** **36. ♖e1 ♖xe2** **37. ♖xe2+ ♖d8** **38. ♗xh8**, with still everything to play for.

34... ♖d8 **35. ♖xd4 ♗xd4** **36. ♗xh8** Black's up a huge amount of material, but he decides to finish it off with a flourish.

Winning with Black is a matter of attitude



Many chess players act intimidated when they have the black pieces. They are so preoccupied with White's advantage of the first move, that their predominant urge is to defend against possible threats and to safeguard their position. With his iconoclastic *Black is OK* books, Andras Adorjan has consistently been fighting this negative mindset.

In his brilliant new book Adorjan continues his crusade. He shows that White's advantage is far from obvious and that winning with Black starts with having the right attitude.

Black is Back! is sharp, witty, surprising, entertaining and highly instructive.

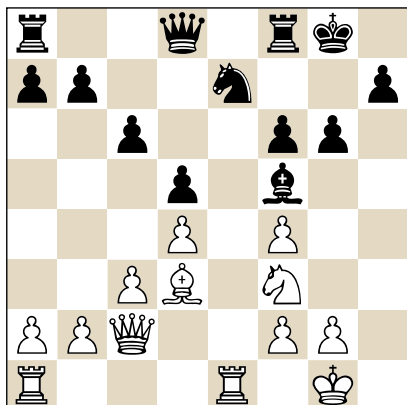


NOTES BY
Vishy Anand

Vishy Anand
Hikaru Nakamura
St. Louis 2016 blitz (7)
Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

This was the third of our four blitz encounters, and I hoped to keep or increase my lead.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.♞e1 ♘d6 6.♘xe5 ♙e7 7.♙f1 ♘f5 8.♘f3 0-0 9.d4 d5 10.c3 ♙d6 11.♙d3 ♘ce7 12.♘bd2 c6 13.♘f1 g6 14.♘g3 f6 15.♞c2 ♘xg3 16.hxg3 ♙f5 17.♙f4 ♙xf4 18.gxf4

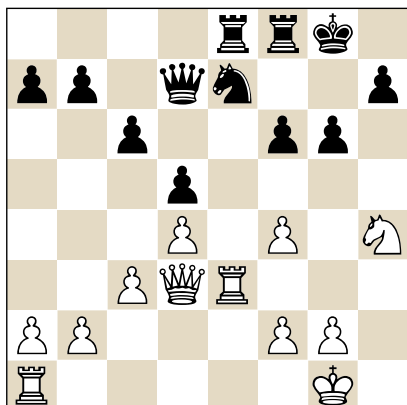


18...♞d7 18...♙xd3 19.♞xd3 ♘f5 is fine for Black.

19.♘h4 ♙xd3 20.♞xd3 ♞ae8

And here 20...♘c8 21.f5 g5 22.♘f3 ♘d6 23.♞e6 ♞ae8 24.♞ae1 ♘b5 is fine for Black.

21.♞e3

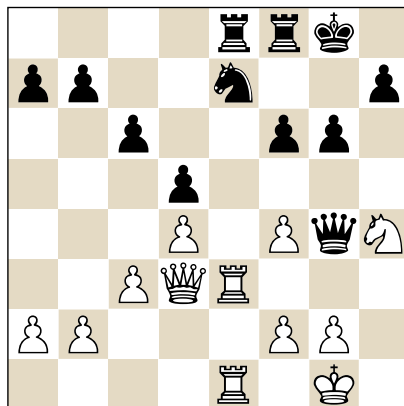


21...♞g4?!

A questionable decision. After 21...♞g7! 22.♞ae1 (22.g3 ♘c8) 22...♘c8 Black has no problems at all. Bad was 21...♘c8? because of

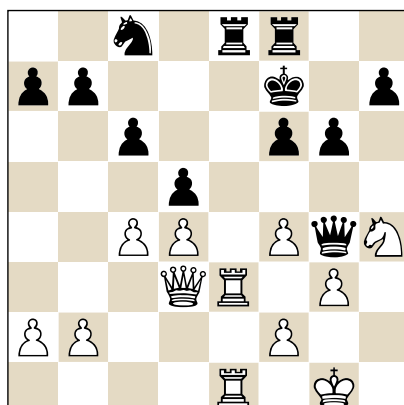
22.♘xg6! ♞xe3 (in case of 22...hxg6 23.♞xg6+ ♞g7 24.♞xe8! wins), when 23.♘xf8 is the point.

22.♞ae1



22...♞f7 He should have played 22...♞xh4! 23.g3 (23.♞xe7 ♞xe7 24.♞xe7 ♞xf4 25.♞h3 ♞c1+ is just a draw) 23...♞h3 24.♞xe7 ♞c8 25.♞e2 ♞xe7 26.♞xe7 ♞f7, and Black defends.

23.g3 ♘c8 24.c4! A slight bluff, but I had to act before he played ...♘d6.

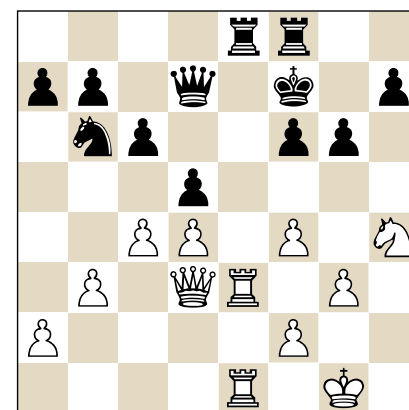


24...♘b6 Now 24...♘d6 25.cxd5 cxd5 26.♞b3 was the point.

24...♞xe3 25.♞xe3 dxc4 26.♞xc4+ ♞g7 works for Black, but is hard to play in a 3-minute game.

25.b3 25.c5 ♘c4 26.♞xe8 ♞xe8 27.♞xe8 ♞xe8 28.b3 ♘a3 holds, but I went b3 as a reflex.

25...♞d7

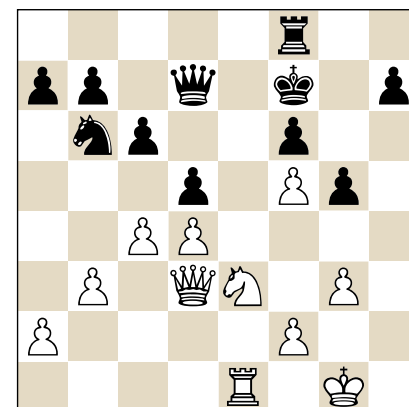


I was really happy after this move, since I could now achieve my set-up.

26.f5 g5 27.♘g2!

I hadn't spotted 27.♞e6 at all, when Black should go 27...♘a8!, and we get a similar position to the game (but not 27...gxh4 28.♞e2!, and White wins).

27...♞xe3 28.♘xe3



I was aiming for this and felt that not only is White better, but that White's moves would be natural.

28...♞e8 29.♞g2 ♞g7 30.c5 ♘c8 31.b4 After 31.♞h1 Black plays 31...♞e7 and 32...♞e4+.

The computer rightly wants to stop ...h5 with 31.g4!, but I was focussed on the b-file.

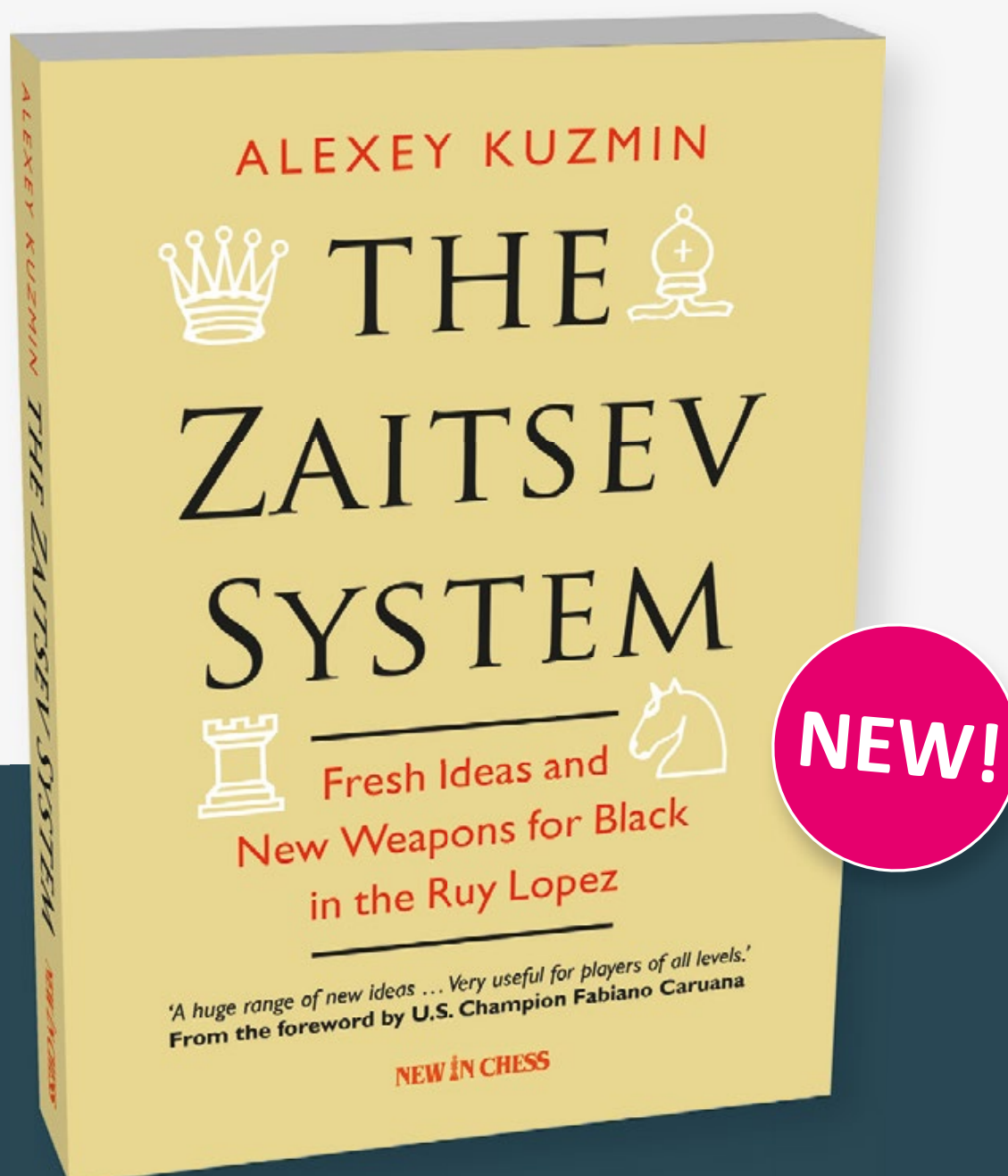
31...♘e7 32.a4 Better was 32.♞h1!. **32...h5 33.b5 ♘g8**

St. Louis 2016 – blitz

cat. XXII

			1	2	3	4	TPR
1	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM USA 2779	****	½ ½ 0 1	1 0 ½ 0	1 1 1 1	7½ 3000
2	Vishy Anand	IGM IND 2779	½ ½ 1 0	****	½ ½ 1 ½	½ 1 ½ ½	7 2815
3	Fabiano Caruana	IGM USA 2823	0 1 ½ 1	½ ½ 0 ½	****	½ 1 0 1	6½ 2810
4	Veselin Topalov	IGM BUL 2760	0 0 0 0	½ 0 ½ ½	½ 0 1 0	****	3 2612

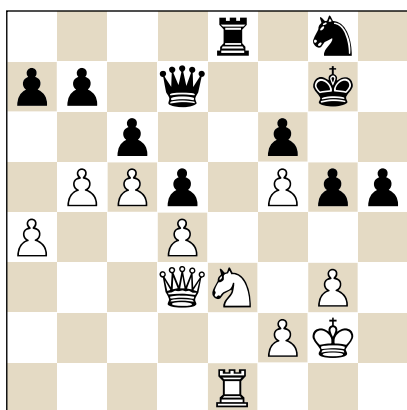
Suited for club players AND elite Grandmasters



Alexey Kuzmin has created a truly unique book. It is not just chock-full of novelties that will shake the ground of chess at the highest level, but it is also extremely accessible for amateur players taking their first steps with the dynamic Zaitsev System.

"A very useful educational tool for people starting out with the Zaitsev System. Contains a wealth of original ideas which makes it also a very useful source for preparation, even for tournaments of the highest calibre."

From the foreword by seven-time Russian Champion Peter Svidler

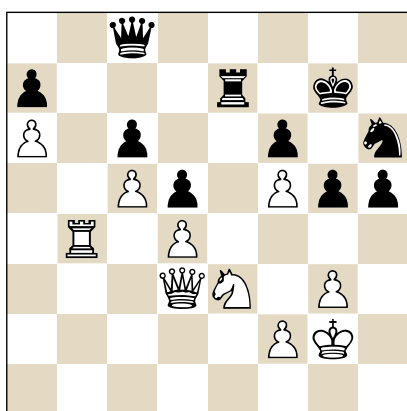


34. ♖b1 Pursuing my plan. 34. ♖h1 would be met by 34... ♕e7. But if I had noticed 34. ♕e2!, I certainly would have played it: 34... ♕f7 (White is also much better after 34... h4 35. gxf4 gxf4 36. ♕h5 ♖f8 37. ♕xh4) 35. bxc6 bxc6 36. ♕a6 ♕d7 37. ♖b1 ♕e7 38. ♖b8 ♘h6 39. ♕c8!, and White wins.

34... ♘h6 35. bxc6 I am not sure why I didn't play the natural move 35. a5!, for instance 35... ♖e7 36. a6 bxa6 37. bxc6 ♕xc6 38. ♕d1!.

35... bxc6 36. a5 ♖e7 37. a6 ♕c8 38. ♖b4?

This threatens absolutely nothing.



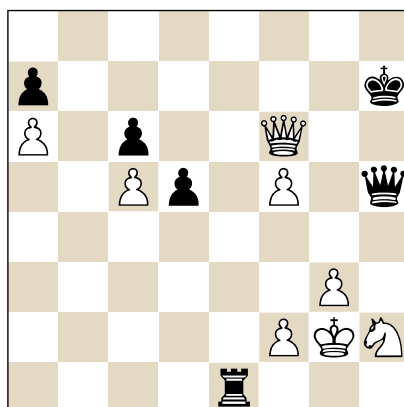
38... g4? After 38... ♘g4! Black has equalized. **39. ♖b1** After 39. ♕b1 the computer points out a nice line: 39... ♕xa6 40. ♕h1 ♖xe3 41. ♕xh5! ♖xg3+ 42. ♖xg3 ♕a3+ 43. ♖h2, and White wins. **39... ♘f7? 40. ♖h1 ♕e8** An indirect defence, but it doesn't work. **41. ♖xh5! ♘e5 42. dxe5 ♕xh5 43. exf6+ ♖xf6 44. ♕d4+ ♖f7 45. ♘g4 ♖e1** The only idea. **46. ♕f6+ ♖g8 47. ♕d8+** This looked tempting. **47... ♖f7 48. ♕d7+ ♖f8** Here I realized that White wasn't getting anywhere. **49. ♕d6+ ♖g7 50. ♕f6+** And so

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'Vishy had the best time management, the best openings, the best tactics and easily the best understanding.'

I headed back. **50... ♖h7 51. ♘h2** Oh well, but White is very safe and Black's pawns on a7 and c6 are weak.



51... ♕d1? After 51... ♕h6 52. ♕d8 ♕g7 53. ♘f3 (53. ♕d6 is even stronger) 53... ♖e7 54. ♕d6 Black's pieces don't coordinate well and White will pick up more pawns. **52. ♕g6+ ♖h8** I did spend a second here before I noticed that **53. f6** wins, because of 53... ♖g1+ 54. ♖h3. Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

St. Louis 2016 – total

	points
1 Vishy Anand	15
2 Hikaru Nakamura	14
3 Veselin Topalov	11
4 Fabiano Caruana	8
24 games	

The first game of the last round-robin was a must-win game for Nakamura against Anand. The struggle was real, and the American pushed for 139 moves against a resourceful defender. However, with delay being the only thing keeping his clock afloat, Anand was unable to hold a rook vs. bishop endgame, flagged and lost.

If you've been keeping track, this was the end of Vishy's undefeated streak in the tournament! Despite this loss, however, with only two rounds to go Vishy's lead was still at 1½ points. It was Fabiano that sealed the standings of the tournament by beating Hikaru in the penultimate round.

Looking back, it's beyond obvious that Vishy was the best player, and by such a margin! He won by only one point in the end, but it could easily have been two or three considering the amazing positions he had and sometimes let go. Vishy had the best time management, the best openings, the best tactics and easily the best understanding. For me, personally, it was a pleasure to hear the Tiger of Madras roar: I had heard rumours and stories about how dominant Vishy was at rapid in the 90s and early 2000s, but I wasn't as heavily involved in chess then and never got to see it live. To see him crush some of the best chess players in the world, well, that was a true delight. ■



Judit Polgar

The Queen's King's Gambit

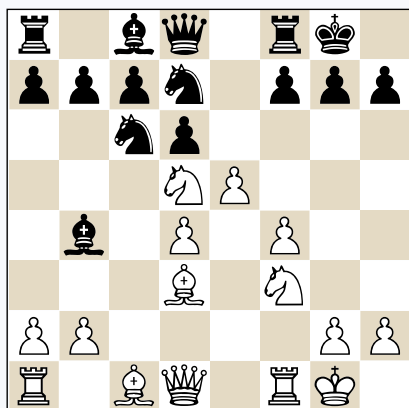
From an early age on, **JUDIT POLGAR** has felt attracted to the King's Gambit, and not only because it was a battlefield on which she could display her tactical wizardry.

The impact of the classics, as mentioned in my previous article, did not only reflect abstractly in my general style, but also in my opening repertoire. Since my early years as a chess player, I played the King's Gambit, which, together with the Evans Gambit, used to be one of the most popular openings in the 19th century.

Looking through my old games, I came across one played when I was eight, showing that the King's Gambit had become sort of my 'native chess tongue'.

Judit Polgar - Evarth Kahn
Budapest 1984
King's Gambit Declined

1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♗c5 3.♗f3 d6 4.c3 ♗c6?! 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♗c3 ♖e7 8.♗d3 ♗f6 9.e5 0-0 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♗d5 ♖d8



Having accumulated an overwhelming space advantage, I now delivered a classical combination:

12.♗xh7+! ♖xh7 13.♗g5+ ♖h6 14.f5 There is no satisfactory defence against 15.♗e6+ ♖h7 16.♖h5 mate, or 15.♗xf7+, winning the queen. **14... ♖xg5 15.♗xg5+ ♖xg5 16.♗f4 g6 17.♖g4+ ♖h6 18.♖h4+ ♖g7 19.f6+ 1-0.**

Playing such sharp openings at a young age is highly recommended, as it develops one's tactical and dynamic skills, but remarkably enough, I played the King's Gambit exclusively until the age of 12, when I became the highest-rated woman in the world.

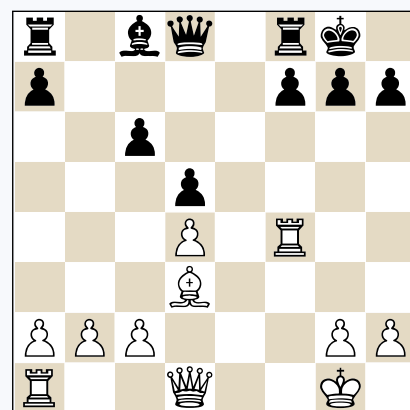
When trying to find further examples confirming the general opinion (including my own) that I was mainly a tactical player, I was surprised to discover that most of my King's Gambit games showed a different picture.

Here is a typical example from one of my best tournaments in those years.

Judit Polgar - Sheila Jackson
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988
King's Gambit, Nimzowitsch Variation

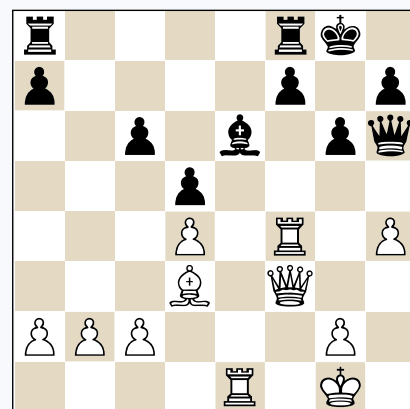
1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 c6 4.♗c3 exf4 5.♗f3 ♗d6 6.d4 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 ♗xd5 9.♗xd5 cxd5 10.♗e5

♗c6 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♗xf4 ♗xf4 13.♗xf4



The opening has ended peacefully, but in the middlegame it will be precisely the static structure that will allow me to develop a lasting initiative based on my active pieces, without fearing Black's counterplay.

13... ♖g5 14.♖f3 ♗e6 15.♗e1 g6 16.h4 ♖h6



17.♗f2!?

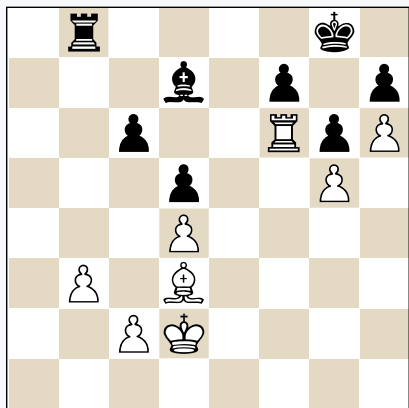
An extravagant move, preparing ♗h1, followed by the advance of the g-pawn. It is worth mentioning that this will not be a mating attack, but slow preparation for a much better ending.

I could have prepared the same plan with 17.♖f2, for instance 17... ♗ab8 18.b3 a5 19.g4 a4 20.g5 ♖g7 21.♗f6. With hindsight, this would have been a more effective plan, since in the middlegame Black faces more difficulties freeing herself with ...f7-f6 than in the endgame.

When choosing my last move, I more

or less anticipated the later simplification, when the king is suddenly needed in the centre.

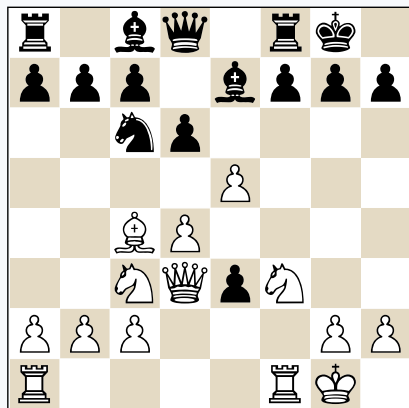
17...♖ab8 18.b3 a5 19.♗h1 a4 20.g4 axb3 21.g5 ♕g7 22.axb3 ♖b4 23.♖e3 ♖e8 24.♖e1 ♖f8 25.♖e5 ♘d7 26.♖f6 ♖xe1 27.♔xe1
Justifying my 17th move.
27...♖e8+ 28.♔d2 ♖b8 29.h5 ♖e6 30.h6 ♖xf6 31.♖xf6



The strategic squeeze in the middlegame has resulted in a promising endgame.

Boris Spassky - Ratmir Kholmov
Moscow 1964
King's Gambit, Cunningham Defence

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 ♘e7 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘g4 6.d4 ♘e3 7.♙xe3 fxe3 8.♙c4 d6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖d3 ♘c6



Black has displayed some early activity, gaining the bishop pair, but White has retained his space advantage and better development.

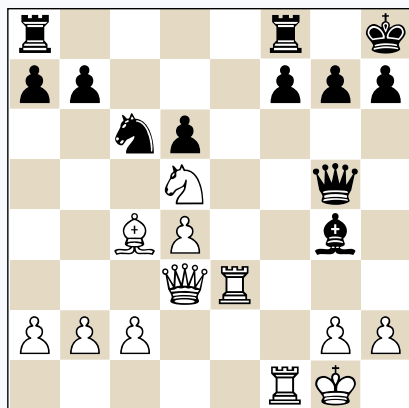
‘Playing such sharp openings at a young age is highly recommended, as it develops the tactical and dynamic skills.’

With all Black’s pawns on light squares, you might consider her bishop really ‘bad’, but things are not that simple. In order to make progress, White needs to remove the rook from f6, thus offering Black counterplay based on ...f7-f6. My opponent failed to use her chances and I won 20 moves later.

In fact, White’s main goal in the King’s Gambit is strategic. The first player aims at getting a strong central majority, ensuring active play after the desired pawn retrieval.

In the 20th century, the King’s Gambit ceased to be an important opening, but players like David Bronstein and Boris Spassky made good use of it in dozens of games. Here is an impressive positional win by the 10th World Champion.

11.exd6 cxd6?! A curious decision. Kholmov may have wished to slow down the central majority, but since he will never get to play ...d6-d5, his last move only creates weaknesses. 11...♙xd6 or 11...♖xd6 were preferable, with just some slight white pressure. 12.♖ae1 ♙g4 13.♖xe3 ♔h8 14.♘d5 ♙g5 15.♘xg5 ♖xg5



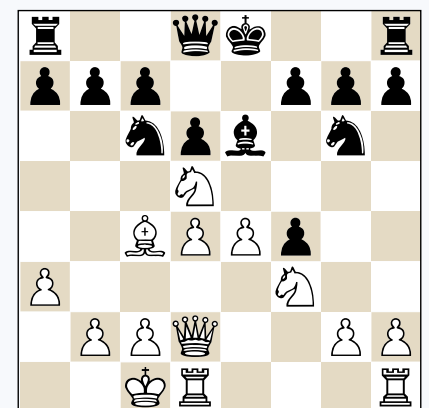
With the centre firmly in his hands, White switches to a kingside attack, deciding the game surprisingly quickly.
16.♖g3 ♖h5 17.♘e3 ♙d7 18.♘f5 ♙xf5 19.♖xf5 ♖h4 20.c3 ♖e7 21.♖e3 ♖d7 22.♖ef3 ♘d8 Sad necessity, as after 22...f6 23.♖h5 Black is just lost: 23...h6 24.♖g6 ♖e7 25.♙d3. **23.♖e4 g6?** This only makes things worse. Black should have tried simplifying to a joyless ending with 23...♖e8 24.♖h4 ♖e7. **24.♖h4 ♖g8?!** Losing at once, but there was no satisfactory defence against ♖h3, for instance 24...♔g7 25.♖h3 ♖xf5 26.♖h6+ ♔f6 27.♖xf8. **25.♖xf7! 1-0.**

The last two games are inspiring to an active positional player, but there are many concrete details in the early opening which don’t always work out so well for White. In 1989, therefore, I started studying and regularly playing the much sounder Ruy Lopez, while keeping my beloved childhood opening as a surprise weapon.

The next game, my last King’s Gambit for a long time, shows that it can be lethal at grandmaster level, too, if one’s opponent does not have the specific preparation.

Judit Polgar - Dibyendu Barua
Biel Interzonal 1993
King’s Gambit, Bishop’s Game

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♙c4 ♘e7 4.♘c3 ♘g6 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.d4 ♙b4 7.♙d2 d6 8.a3 ♙a5 9.♘d5 ♙xd2+ 10.♖xd2 ♙e6 11.0-0-0



Black seems to enjoy free development while having kept his extra pawn at

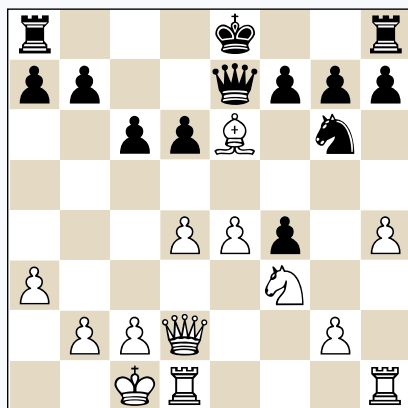
least temporarily due to the pin of the d5-knight. But his pieces do not have active prospects, as they are restricted by my strong and threatening centre. We could compare this position with the modern Catalan Gambit tabiyas, in which Black keeps his extra pawn on c4 but offers White a free hand in the centre.

11...♖ce7?!

Fighting against my central knight is right in principle, but with incomplete development it is too time-consuming. 11...0-0 exposes the king in the long term: 12.h4 h5 13.♗g5, retrieving the pawn (on either h5 or f4), and White has excellent attacking chances.

11...♔d7 looks safest, but White retains some advantage with 12.h4 h5 13.♕b5, soon followed by ♗xf4.

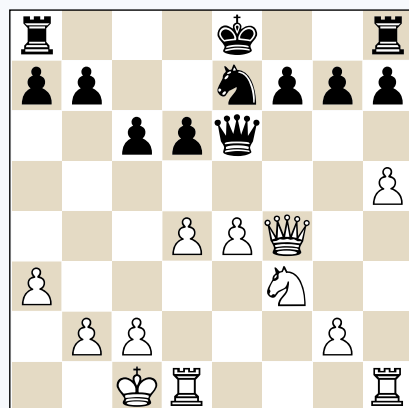
12.h4 c6 13.♗xe7 ♖xe7 14.♕xe6



14...♖xe6?!

Increasing the pawn control in the centre with 14...fxe6 looks like a better try, even though after 15.h5 ♗f8 16.♖xf4 ♗d7 17.h6 White's advantage is obvious.

15.h5 ♗e7 16.♖xf4

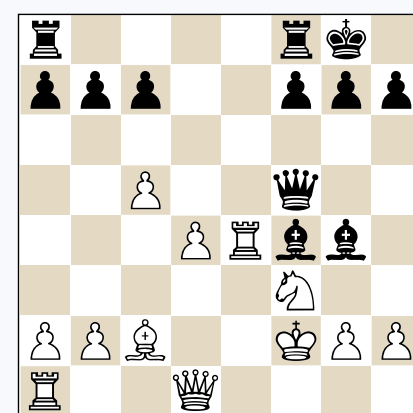


16...♖h6

An extreme measure against the unpleasant threat h5-h6, but 16...h6 allows 17.d5 cxd5 18.exd5, when 18...♗xd5? is not to be recommended due to 19.♖d4 ♗e7 20.♖he1, with a decisive attack.

17.♖xh6 gxh6 18.♖h4 ♖g8 19.♖d2 ♖g7 20.♖f4 And I won this obviously better endgame.

After this game I practically abandoned the King's Gambit, but it never ceased to have a special place in my heart.



Polgar-Topalov

Mexico City KO rapid 2010
position after 19.♕c2

I was leading by 2½-½ in the final match, so my win was ensured. When things are going well, one can afford extravagant decisions, such as playing the King's Gambit after a 7-year break. Black's active bishops compensate for my strong centre, but Topalov's next move was a blunder.

19...♕h5? He might have felt that his bishops were hanging or else wished to neutralize my bishop.

20.♖e5! Setting up a deadly mechanism.

20...♕xf3 Or if 20...♖g4 21.♕f5 traps the queen. **21.♖xf3 ♖f6 22.♖f5!**

As an echo-variation to the comment above, my other piece occupies the f5-square, winning the f4-bishop. Topalov resigned a few moves later. ■



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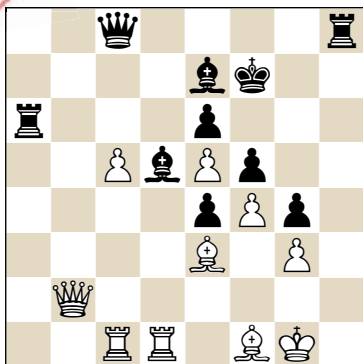
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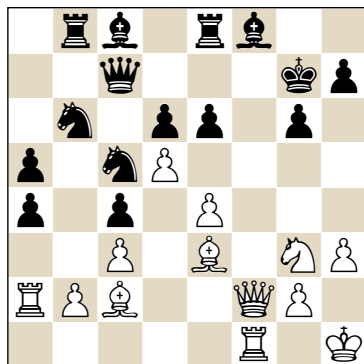
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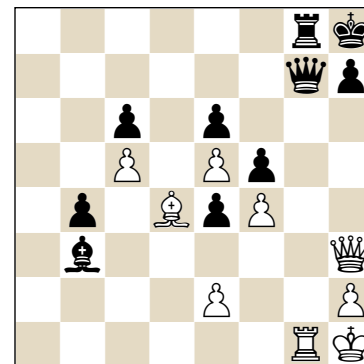
1. Arond-Carey
Manchester, NH USA, 2016

Black goes straight for the h2-square:
30... ♖a2 31. ♕b6 ♜h1+ Here
White resigned because of 32. ♕xh1
♜h8+ 33. ♕g1 ♜h2.



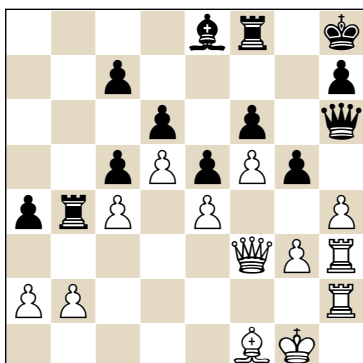
2. Hou Yifan-Jackson
Isle of Man 2016

The women's World Champion played
it straight and bright: **31. ♘h5+! gxh5**
32. ♙h6+! ♕xh6 33. ♜f6 Mate.



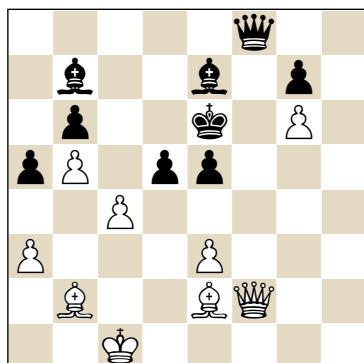
3. Frayna-Hoang Thanh Trang
Baku Olympiad 2016

35... ♜xg1+! 36. ♙xg1 e3 White
resigned, as covering the long diago-
nal would cost her the queen.



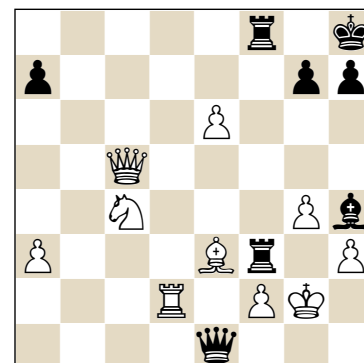
4. Inarkiev-Hou Yifan
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky 2016

31...g4! Now the natural 32. ♜xg4
♙h5 gets the queen ensnared. Since
it was a rapid game, the European
Champion made several useless
moves and resigned after move 37.



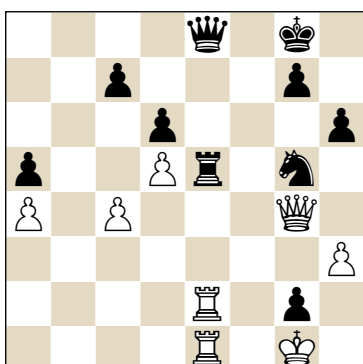
5. Indjic-Cruz
Baku Olympiad 2016

31. ♙g4+ ♕d6 32. ♙xe5+! On
32... ♕c5, 33. ♙d4+ ♕xc4 (33... ♕d6
34. ♜h2+) 34. ♜c2+ ♕xb5 35. ♙e2
is mate. **32... ♕xe5 33. ♜b2+!** The
winning zigzag! Black resigned, as it's
checkmate after 33... ♕e4 34. ♜d4 or
33... ♕d6 34. ♜h2+ ♕c5 35. ♜c7+.



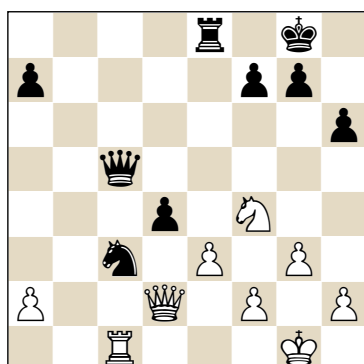
6. Wang Yue-Mareco
Baku Olympiad 2016

34... ♜g3+! 35. fxg3 ♜f1+ 36. ♕h2
♙xg3+! The Olympic Champion of
Tromsø 2014 resigned on account
of 37. ♕xg3 ♜f3+ 38. ♕h4 ♜xh3+
39. ♕g5 ♜h6 mate.



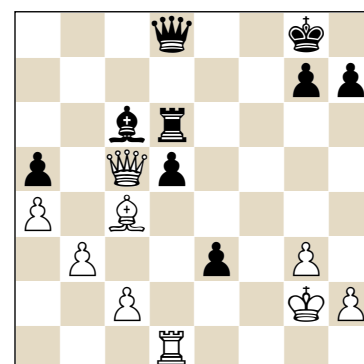
7. Hou Yifan-Caruana
Isle of Man 2016

28... ♜xe2 29. ♜xe2 ♜xe2!
30. ♜xe2 ♘xh3+ 31. ♕h2 Less
hopeless than 31. ♕xg2 ♘f4+ but
hopeless all the same. **31...g1 ♜+**
32. ♕xh3 ♕h7 and the game ended
before the time-control.



8. Askerov-Lobanov
Khanty-Mansiysk 2016

27...dxe3! 28. ♜xc3 Of course
28. fxe3 ♜xe3 is bad for White. Now
things get even worse, however. **28...
exf2+ 29. ♕g2 ♜e1! 30. ♜xe1**
30. ♜xc5 f1 ♜ mate. **30... ♜xc3**
31. ♕xf2 and Black converted easily.



9. Goh-Duda
Baku Olympiad 2016

31. ♜xc6! ♜f8 In case of 31... ♜xc6
32. ♜xd5 ♜e8, 33. ♜d8+ (33. ♜e5+?
♜e6! 34. ♜xe6 ♜a8+) 33... ♕f8
34. ♜xe8+ ♕xe8 35. ♙b5! wins.
32. ♜xd5 ♜xc6 33. ♜d8+ ♜xc4
34. ♜xf8+ with an elementary win.



He was often called the best trainer in the world, a view that could be substantiated by a list of the people he worked with. In a highly personal tribute **JACOB AAGAARD** also calls Mark Dvoretsky ‘the best chess author of all time’ – an inspiration that helped him grow as a player and then urged him to start writing books himself. ‘But Mark’s greatest achievement – and you can be sentimental when someone you love has died – was the almost universal respect people held for him.’

‘What would Mark think?’

**Remembering
Mark Dvoretsky
(1947-2016)**

Mark Dvoretsky was one of the leading trainers in the world and an acclaimed author. Many of his books were instant classics.

Before the first round of the Tal Memorial, a minute of silence was held in memory and respect of Mark Dvoretsky, who had died earlier the same day. Although Mark had struggled with his health for almost 20 years, it was only in the last two weeks that his health had sharply deteriorated. ‘It is very sad,’ was Artur Yusupov’s comment when I reached out to him right after reading the news on Twitter. Artur had just returned from the Russian embassy to get a visa to go to Moscow for the funeral and to see Mark’s widow Inna and son Leonid.



Mark Dvoretsky worked with Artur Yusupov and Sergey Dolmatov for 15 years. Dolmatov played in the Candidates' and Yusupov was third in the world after only Kasparov and Karpov.

It is impossible to tell the story of Mark Dvoretsky's life in chess without telling the story of Artur Yusupov. Although Dvoretsky never gained the title of grandmaster, he was the 1973 Moscow Champion and was ranked number 35 in the world in 1975. Despite that clear indication of his playing strength, around that time his focus shifted decisively from being a player to being a trainer. At that point, he had already trained Valery Chekhov, the winner of the 1975 World Junior Championship, but their personal relationship had turned sour and Mark became depressed, which ruined his own play and on several occasions cost him the grandmaster norm. In his autobiography *For Friends and Colleagues 1* he writes that he might have given up coaching if it had not been for meeting an enthusiastic young man called Artur Yusupov. He quickly regained the appetite to prove that his success with Chekhov was not a one-off.

At first, the two were unimpressed by each other. Artur is certain that he must have seen Mark many times in

the Moscow Pioneer Palace, where Artur first came in 1966 and where Mark had been a student and later worked as a teaching assistant. Artur thinks he may have played against Mark in a simul, but has no recollection of such an event!

On the other hand, Mark thought that Yusupov lacked talent and imagination. When he was approached by Artur and his father, he was reluctant to take him on, but in the end decided that it would be interesting to see if he could achieve results with a boy without any real talent. Also, Artur was the strongest player of his age range in Moscow, which was experiencing a drought of talent at that time.

Artur experienced the situation differently: 'I believed that Mark was already my trainer! He was teaching me at the Pioneer Palace and at Botvinnik's school. He had given me hundreds of puzzles that I regarded as homework from my trainer!'

Once the two started working together, things fell into place. Artur had found a man who could teach him both about chess and

life: 'Whenever I left Mark's place, I was euphoric. I learned so much on every visit. The world was opening up in front of my eyes and releasing its secrets. I was pretty naïve and had very little real knowledge of the society I was living in.'

A few years before Dvoretsky and Yusupov started working together seriously, Mark Taimanov was stopped at Sheremetyevo Airport. As he returned from his 6-0 loss to Fischer, the authorities were eager to discredit him. They found a book by Solzhenitsyn in his luggage. At the time, Solzhenitsyn was living freely in Moscow and his books were in print, although edited. Only abroad could you find uncensored editions of a lot of the Russian masterpieces. Yusupov says: 'But Mark (Dvoretsky) of course had all of them. I remember he gave me the uncensored version of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* to read. I cried and cried and cried.'

Not long after Dvoretsky took on Yusupov as a student, he also began working with Sergey Dolmatov, whom his coach had selflessly sent to Moscow to find more opportunities. He found Mark Dvoretsky. The three young men worked hard together for 15 years and had many great achievements. Dolmatov played in the Candidates' and Yusupov was third in the world after only Kasparov and Karpov.

Their friendship remained strong, even when Dolmatov and Yusupov had to fight on the board. Yusupov won their Candidates' match in 1991 in a rapid playoff after Dolmatov had been close to winning the match, but had blundered on move 39 of the 8th and final classical game. After the match, Yusupov's father, the spitting image of Artur, hugged Dolmatov, crying.

The travelling coach

Mark worked very hard on improving the chess of his students. He expanded his famous card files with exercises on all aspects of the

game. This was his real focus, helping his students. Mark was very proud of their achievements and loved it when anyone thanked him. Being a genuinely supportive trainer does not have to be coated in false humility. Mark loved explaining how Yusupov was a greater man than himself, while Yusupov to this day still sees Dvoretsky as the one who made him the man he is.

Life in the Soviet Union was tough, not just because of travel bans, political oppression and the lack of freedoms we regard as basic in the West. There are many opinions on why the Soviet Union finally collapsed. The photocopy machine is one I like, but you cannot escape the basics: honest and resourceful people were unable to better their living circumstances. In a similar way, chess was perhaps a big sport, but not a profitable one. Spassky lived in a one-bedroom apartment after winning the 1969 World Championship match.

Dvoretsky never worked with his students for financial gain. 'We tried to give him money whenever we could,' says Yusupov, 'but really it was not much. And I don't think he got paid for working for Botvinnik or lecturing at Moscow University.' Dvoretsky might have been ambitious, but not in a financial sense.

Over time, Dvoretsky and Yusupov would become travelling lecturers, going wherever they were invited, which included Copenhagen and Glasgow/Edinburgh, where I organised their visits.

Dvoretsky was especially active in the Netherlands. World-class training became inexpensive for Western audiences, and Mark enjoyed both making a decent living and travelling. He told me that he had considered emigrating to the US at some point, but had decided that it was a young man's endeavour. Personally, I always believed that despite all the faults with the way the country was run, Dvoretsky was too

proud to be Russian to want to live anywhere else.

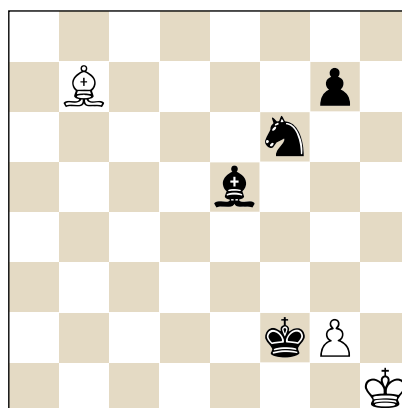
Visitors from abroad

Players also went to visit Mark in Moscow, and many of them saw their results improve. In 1995, Veselin Topalov went to Moscow to work on his endgame play. Mark also found

'When he was approached by Artur and his father, he was reluctant to take him on, but in the end decided that it would be interesting to see if he could achieve results with a boy without any real talent.'

that his calculating abilities could be improved, and over two weeks they worked on both aspects. As Topalov told me: 'Mark Dvoretsky was the best non-opening coach I have met in my life. The training sessions with Mark helped me elevate my understanding of endgames and calculation to a high level. After the training I won the Rubinstein Memorial.

'One position he showed me that I remember to this day is a curious fortress, where White's king is on h1, his bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal (for example on b7). Black has a king, knight, bishop on almost any square and a pawn on the g-file:



'Black is a piece up, but the position is a draw.'

In 1996, Topalov tied for first in tournaments with Kasparov and shot

to number four in the rating list.

And Czech number one David Navara recalled: 'I first attended a lecture with Mark in January 2007. I was deeply impressed. Later, I had private training sessions with him. They were very fruitful and often followed by successful tournaments. Dvoretsky was not focused on

opening theory, but instead taught his students general principles and how to use them.

'He did his homework and often instantly refuted my proposed solutions to his puzzles. But he was not blind to his own mistakes either. This is one of the reasons why there are so few inaccuracies in his books and why he was constantly updating them.

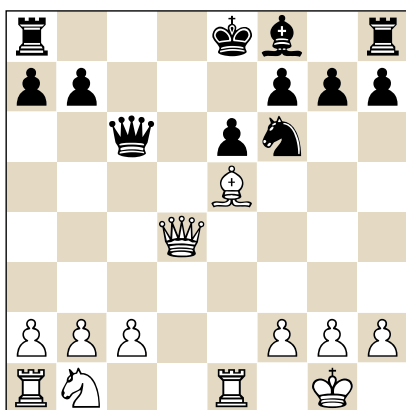
'Dvoretsky was good company. He was an intelligent and educated person who cared about his students. He possessed a sense of humour as well. About chess politics he would say: "I don't care if Kirsan Ilyumzhinov is on friendly terms with aliens, as they do no harm. I am much more worried about his association with certain types of humans!"'

Career shift

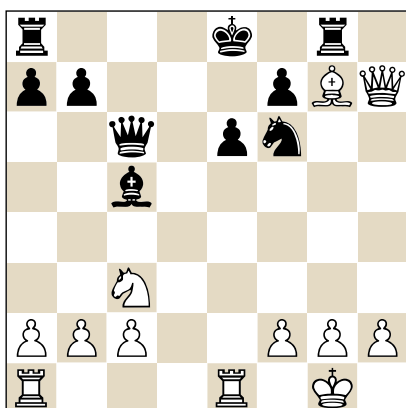
In the mid-1970s, Dvoretsky had given a lecture on basic endgame principles at Moscow University, which inspired Mikhail Shereshevsky to write *Endgame Strategy*. The book was a big success when it was published in 1975 and also gained international acclaim when it was translated into English. It is still in print today.

Masterclass with Dvoretsky: Three small exercises

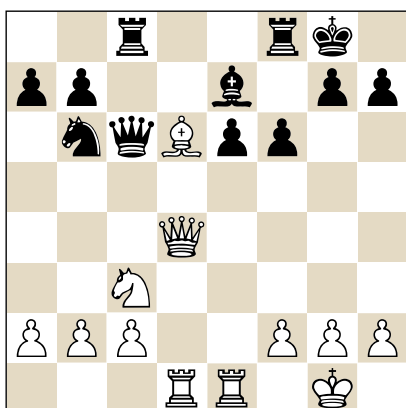
From Mark I learned to find the interesting moments from any game I analysed and turn them into exercises. These three positions from the game on page 72 will hopefully challenge and inspire you.



Move 13. White to play – On the edge of the opening, White should decide how to arrange his pieces.



Note to move 15. White to play – White might have taken a bite of the poisonous apple, or is there a way out?



Move 20. Black to play and win (difficult) – The engines failed to see Black's strongest option when I looked at this game 14 years ago. Now they spot it in a heartbeat.

In the late 1980s, Artur Yusupov and Sergey Dolmatov started putting ideas into Dvoretsky's head. 'Mark, maybe you should consider writing a book?', they would say to him from time to time, and no doubt this planted a seed. *The Secrets of Chess Training*, a collection of articles on various topics to do with chess training, first published in Russia and then in England by the leading chess publisher of the day, Batsford, was an immediate international success and won the British Chess Federation's *Book of the Year* award in 1991. It was followed by *The Secrets of Chess Tactics* not long after.

Meanwhile, Yusupov and Dvoretsky decided to build on the tradition they had grown up with themselves. Botvinnik, Smyslov and Petrosian no longer had their chess schools, and the duo decided to organize training camps. Dvoretsky had once dreamt of organising a seminar for trainers from all over Russia where they could share ideas and improve chess countrywide. But those he contacted were only interested in speaking, not so much in listening, so the concept was shelved. Instead, they now wanted to bring together talented youngsters from all over Russia and invite guest speakers to supplement the work the kids did with their regular trainers. Part of the concept right from the beginning was to collect the presentations into instructional volumes.

Five sessions were held, and five volumes of *School of Future Champions* were published before the project fell apart. Returning home from a tournament abroad, Artur Yusupov had been injured in a botched amateur robbery in Moscow and decided to move to Germany. But this was not the main problem, as he explains: 'The financial situation in Russia in the early 1990s was dire. We were failing to raise the necessary funding. Not for Mark and myself; we did not get paid. But the students and guest speakers had expenses that

needed to be covered. In the end, it became impossible to do so.'

Mark soon found that students would move to Moscow and some even to the same district as him. Again, he was not looking for riches, but simply enjoyed helping the next generation along. Vladimir Potkin, the 2011 European Champion and trainer of many, including the Russian team and Sergey Karjakin, recalls the contagious excitement Dvoretsky infected his students with:

'Once at a training camp Mark Dvoretsky gave Alexander Motylev and myself six difficult exercises as homework for the next training session. Full of youthful confidence we started solving the exercises in the metro on our way home. When we arrived at Kuzminki, we decided to call Mark with our solutions. He did not hide his astonishment. By pure coincidence we had solved the first exercise correctly... But this was as far as our youthful arrogance took us; our ideas about the remaining exercises were entirely misconceived. That day we learned a lot, not only about chess, but also about the importance of patience in the pursuit of big goals.'

Universal respect

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Dvoretsky continued to work with young promising players who impressed him as human beings. Besides the names already mentioned, there were Victor Bologan, Ernesto Inarkiev, Evgeny Najer, Alexey Dreev, Vadim Zviagintsev, Alexander Riazantsev and others. Having undergone major surgery around 2000, he reduced the amount of pressure he put on himself, realising that he no longer had the energy needed to support a young player. He worked with Inarkiev until 2006, and later with Popov, but focused more and more on his writing.

Again, Artur Yusupov and Sergey Dolmatov came with good advice. Mark took it, and the result was

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual. With Dvoretsky's trademark focus on helping the ambitious player, the book covers the theoretical endings a chess professional should know perfectly. With explanations, exercises and 'tragicomedies', the book is instructional at its core and has very little in common with Averbakh's encyclopaedia and other endgame manuals of the past. It is Mark's magnum opus, and like every true artist, he kept improving it until he died. The latest Russian edition was published this year. Rumour has it that it was distributed to the members of the Russian Olympiad team on publication, including their very successful Board 2. As Vladimir Kramnik put it: 'I rate *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* highly. I think it is possibly the best chess book of this kind ever written' – an opinion that I second, except that I would remove the conditionals 'possibly' and 'this kind'.

'I don't care if Kirsan Ilyumzhinov is on friendly terms with aliens, as they do no harm. I am much more worried about his association with certain types of humans!'

Also, in 2002, he recommended a young man to find the answers to his many questions in a book called *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*. When the young man's publisher declined to translate it from Russian into English, the young man founded his own publishing house to make sure it happened and started carrying the torch Mark had lit with his books...

But Mark Dvoretsky's greatest achievement – and you can be sentimental when someone you love has died – was the almost universal respect people held for him. As Peter Svidler said: 'Mark Dvoretsky was a moral authority and general all-

round authority figure you could (and should, frankly) look up to and use as a "what would Mark think/do?" benchmark.' This is something that was echoed by everyone I have spoken to for this article. Alexander Motylev summed up Mark's qualities as a human being beautifully:



Together with Alexander Motylev. 'This summer I woke up in the middle of one night, feeling grateful towards Mark Izrailevich for everything.'

'Mark Dvoretsky's influence on a young player's abilities is the stuff of legends, but so is his character. Mark Izrailevich was an honest and decent man, scrupulously moral. He did not engage with people with dubious moral qualities and was not impressed by money or prestige. Maybe this is the reason why he did not manage to train a World Champion. His chief disciples, Yusupov, Dolmatov and Zviagintsev, are well-educated and honest and simply incapable of meanness. If it is true that to become World Champion you would have to throw everything else aside for the sake of victory, to fully concentrate yourself on one goal

only, then maybe Mark Dvoretsky was unable to mentor a champion. Instead he mentored decent men. This was a conscious choice and not one he ever regretted.

'Some people who achieve success in their field think it makes them experts at everything. Mark was not one of them. He had no problem acknowledging his own blank spots, though to us they seemed few and far between. He enjoyed forming opinions carefully and would then not change them easily. Our views on life were similar, but I can imagine that to those with other views, Mark could come across as difficult.

'To me he was always a role model in matters of morality. After we grew closer, I would at times feel more responsible for my actions, feeling an invisible stare over my shoulder of someone with a clearer and brighter gaze, someone with a conscience more rigorous and sensitive.

This summer I woke up in the middle of one night, feeling grateful towards Mark Izrailevich for everything. I wanted to call him, but the hour was late and I delayed it till the next day. As usual, life happened and I forgot to call him. He must have known how much we all appreciated his guidance, but still I would have liked to have made this one last call to simply say: thank you.'

Masterclass with Dvoretsky

In 2002, I had a private training session with Mark in Moscow that profoundly changed the way I thought about chess. Honestly, I was not a very strong player at the time. I was an IM and had some imagination and random knowledge, but I had not yet worked systematically on chess. This is where it all started for me.

We analysed my games from the recent Politiken Cup and I told him what I had been thinking during the game. Looking at the game now, there are some very interesting details that I was nowhere close to seeing during the game. I have included them, because the chess is interesting, but the main moments to look out for are the notes to moves 13 and 22.

Ruben Felgaer
Jacob Aagaard
 Copenhagen 2002
 Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♙d7 4.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5.0-0 ♘f6 6.e5 dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♚c7

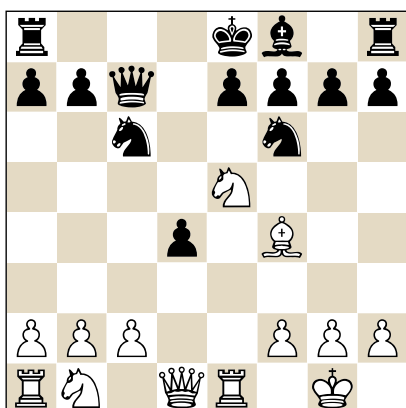
7...♚c8!? is probably a better move.

8.d4 cxd4 9.♙f4 ♘c6?!

This is a very natural looking move, but because of the imprecise 7th move, Black has to show more accuracy in order to solve his problems.

9...♚b6! is what practice has shown is the way to proceed.

10.♖e1



Black is already faced with some awkward decisions, and this is one of the first points I learned from training with Mark, which I later found was the approach of almost all grandmasters: understanding the difficulty of the task matters just as much as what you can prove later in your analysis.

Mark loved comparison, elimination and other thinking techniques, which he presents in his books and which I have elaborated on in my own books.

10...♘xe5

The engine suggests 10...♚a5, but who would honestly come up with such a move? White will definitely regain the pawn, after which Black has wasted more time and more of his pawns have become weak.

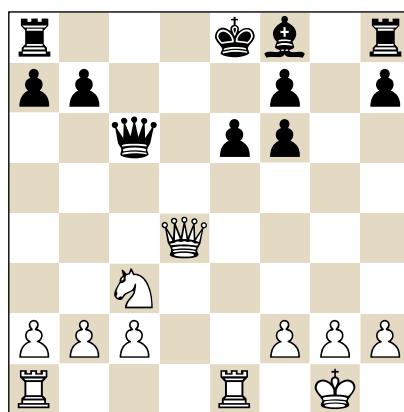
11.♙xe5 ♚c6 12.♚xd4 e6!

I had to play this. Develop or die. But my thinking about it was rather flawed.

13.♘c3?!

So was my opponent's.

When showing him the game, Mark immediately pointed out that White should weaken the white pawn structure with 13.♙xf6 gxf6, not with the intention of accepting a pawn sacrifice, but to simply continue with 14.♘c3!,



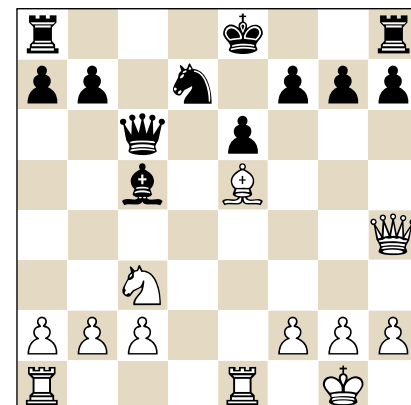
when the weaknesses will require long-term attention. Black is of course not seriously worse, but a good game of chess is won incrementally, whereas a bad game is won by noticing when you are in luck.

Ironically, I was facing an opponent that had prepared 14.♚xf6 against

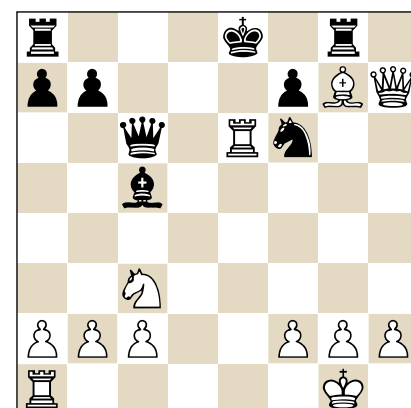
me later that same year, but of course he never got the chance.

13...♙c5 14.♚h4 ♘d7?!

14...♙e7!, with an equal game, was better, but the tactical range of the players is simply too short.



15.♙g3?! My intention after 15.♙g3 ♚g8 16.♚xh7 was to play 16...♘f6, when I believed I would be winning. If the white queen goes to h6, there are problems on f2. But the method of candidate moves and especially of performing a candidates' check before you make any decision, shows that everything is far from over: 17.♚xe6+!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Taking with the pawn would allow White to give a check on g6 and take the knight at an opportune moment. With Black's pieces all uncoordinated, this would be a recipe for disaster. So the forced sequence is: 17...♚xe6 18.♙xf6 ♙xf2+ (18...♖f8 19.♘e4, and it is all over) 19.♙f1! (19.♙h1 ♚g4 20.♚e4+ ♚xe4 21.♘xe4 ♙b6, and the position is in some kind of dynamic balance) 19...♚a6+ 20.♘e2 ♚xf6 21.♚xg8+ ♙e7 22.♚g4. An endgame will soon

emerge in which Black is well-placed and has counterplay but will still be playing for a draw, since he will also be at least a pawn down.

15...♙e7 16.♚e4 ♖c8 17.♚d4?! White has lost his advantage, but does not seem to be ready to admit it. This double attack is no threat at all.

17...0-0 18.♖ad1

If White had accepted the pawn sacrifice with 18.♚xa7, Black would have generated active counterplay with 18...♘b6 19.♚a5 ♘c4 20.♚b5 ♙f6, when the pawn will be regained in time and the positional gains will remain.

18...♘b6

With the knight coming to c4 and the bishop to f6, Black is taking over the initiative.

19.♙e5?

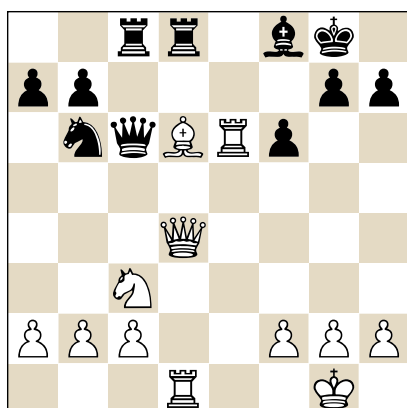
Played in order to lure the pawn to f6 and weaken the e-pawn. But there is a tactical flaw.

19...f6! 20.♙d6?!

20.♙g3 e5 is not what he intended and only benefits Black, but this is what a computer would play.

20...♙xd6?

When you work on this almost 15 years after the game was played, it is natural to check everything with a modern-day engine. This reveals that Black has a pin-combination to end the search for pin-combinations forever: 20...♖fd8. This move was obvious to both players, but rejected on account of 21.♖xe6, and I doubt if my opponent looked any further. I certainly did not. But it turns out that after the quiet move 21...♙f8!!,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

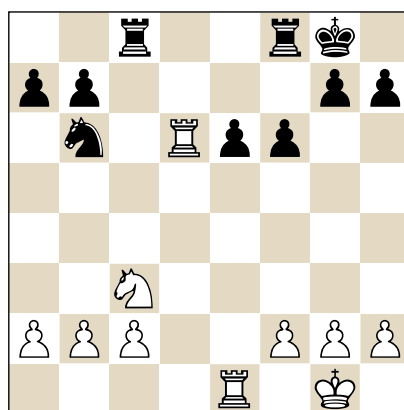


VLADIMIR BARSKY

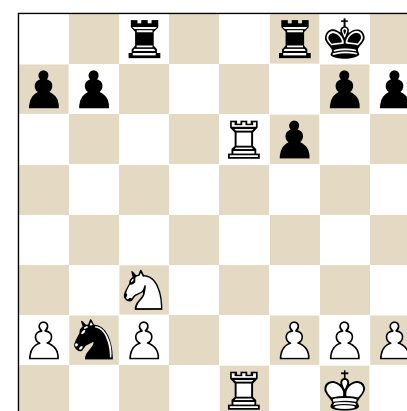
The teacher. Mark Dvoretsky at the Belaya Ladia (White Rook) youth festival in Sochi this summer, only months before his death.

White is pinned in two directions. There are plausible variations all over the place, but none that change the outcome. Black is even threatening ...♙f7, when the rook can be impossible to defend. 22.♚f4 (22.♘e4 ♚c4, and the white position collapses; 22.a4 ♙f7! 23.♘b5 ♙xe6 24.♘xa7 ♚xa4, and wins) 22...♘c4 23.♘e4 ♘xd6 24.♘xd6 ♚d7 25.♚e3 ♖c6 The perfect finish. All black pieces are attacking the knight.

21.♚xd6 ♚xd6 22.♖xd6



22...e5?! The engines prefer this move, but Mark was not impressed. He believed that it would have been better to play 22...♘c4 23.♖dxe6 ♘xb2, when White has a weak pawn on c2. From a practical standpoint, which is after all what matters most to a competitive player, he was no doubt right.

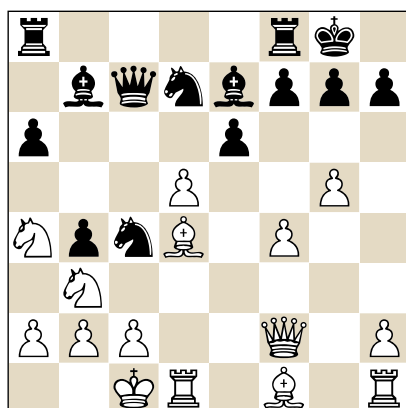


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The computer will say that 24.♘d5! ♖xc2 25.♖e7 (or 25.♖d6!?) 25...♘d3 26.♖d1 ♘xf2 27.♖d4! offers White enough counterplay to make a draw quite quickly, but if we take into account the weak play of both players in this game, it is unlikely that either of us would have transformed into a Komodo dragon...

23.♖d3 ♘c4 24.♘d1 White is a bit worse, but as Mark explained, the disadvantage is not bad, since there are no weaknesses in the white position, which makes it easy for him to slowly untangle himself and equalise. **24...♖fd8 25.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26.b3 ♘d6 27.♘e3 ♘e4 28.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 29.♘xd1 b5 30.♙f1 ♙f7 31.♙e2 ♙e6 32.♙d3 f5 33.f3 ♘d6 34.♘e3 f4 35.♘f1 ♙d5 36.c3 e4+ 37.fxe4+ ♘xe4 38.h3 ♘c5+ 1/2-1/2.**

A year later it was possible to see that my decision-making had significantly improved. In the following sharp game, I was utterly confused, but chose my moves based on the simple truths I was able to detect in the position.



Aagaard-Hoffmann
Budapest 2003
position after 17...♙b7

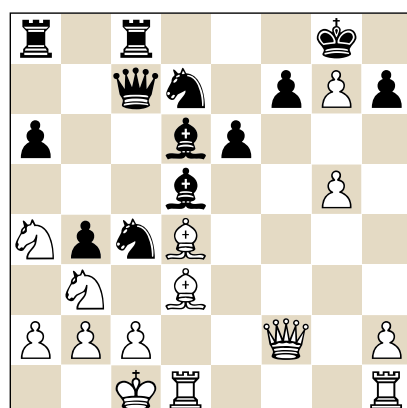
18.f5!? The confusingly sharp 18.♙xc4 ♖xc4 19.d6! was strong, but honestly way beyond me.

18.♙xg7!? ♔xg7 19.♚d4+ ♜ce5 20.♙g2! was not even on the radar.

18...♙xd5 18...exf5 19.♙g2 was my idea. Black can take the g5-pawn if he dares.

19.f6! I could not see a way to exploit the weaknesses in the black position, but I had learned that creating them was a good idea.

19...♙d6 20.fxg7 ♜fc8 21.♙d3

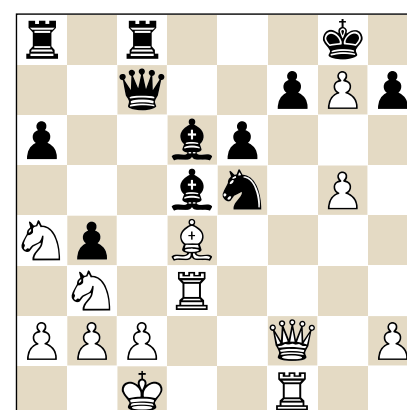


21...♜ce5? 21...♜de5! was the right move, when Black is OK. Again Mark's simple method of comparison would

have helped my opponent to see that the knight is better placed on c4, followed by ♜d7 to e5.

22.♜hf1 ♜xd3+ **23.♜xd3** ♜e5

The training Mark inspired me to do on tactics meant that I was able to see 23...e5 24.♙c5! ♙xb3 25.axb3 ♜xc5 26.♜xc5 ♙xc5 27.♚f5! ♙d4 28.♜h3, when Black has to enter an endgame an exchange down, fighting for a draw.



Again the position was very confusing to me. How to navigate such a position?



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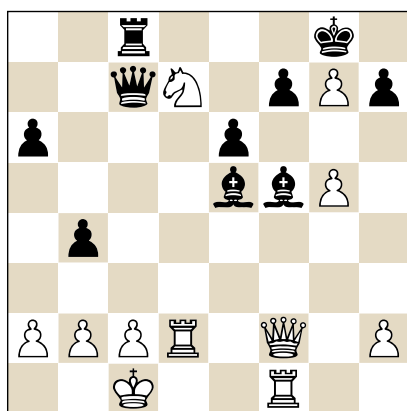


I decided that as I could not see where any of the complications would end, being an exchange up in them would be a good thing. This might sound elementary to you. And it should. But it was not previously elementary to people like me, who are so hyper-dynamic that we forget that extra material matters, too. Even in complicated positions.

24. ♖xe5! ♖xe5 25. ♘b6 ♖e4 26. ♘xa8 ♖xa8 27. ♔d2 I felt this position was fine for Black, which shows how I over-rated activity. But knowing that his position would be active no matter what, at least the simple tool of comparison allowed me to be an exchange up.

27... ♖c8 28. ♘c5! When I saw this, I realized I was much better.

28... ♖f5 29. ♘d7



29... ♖xb2+?! Desperation. 29... ♖xg7 30. ♘f6+, and the bishop has been tamed. **30. ♖xb2 ♖c3+ 31. ♖b1 b3 32. ♘f6+!** It is important to control the g4-square so the king can run to the kingside without facing a deadly check from the bishop. **32... ♖xg7 33. axb3 ♖b8 34. ♘e4 ♖xb3+ 35. cxb3 ♖xb3+ 36. ♖a1 ♖a4+ 37. ♖a2 ♖xe4 38. ♖e1** 1-0.

In 2004, I made three grandmaster norms within four tournaments. The fourth tournament was not a failure either. My opponents were rated 2600+ on average, and I would perhaps have won against a promising 13-year old Norwegian if I had paid more attention to the exchange sacrifices Mark had shown me I had missed in my games. I found one just one move too late, and with accurate moves my opponent held a draw. ■

The essential Dvoretsky Reading List

In my view Mark Dvoretsky is the best chess author of all time. Not because he was a great writer, but because he was the best chess trainer – and chess books are mainly read for their educational value. Below I have given a personal run-down of his immense body of work.

1. Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

The best endgame book for higher level players, providing you with the 200+ positions you should know by heart and a systematic way to learn them.

2. School of Future Champions 1-5

The conversational and informal style of these lectures are well preserved and the instruction is top-notch.

3. School of Chess Excellence 1-4

Contains almost everything you ever would want to know about chess training. In the English versions, I would computer check the solutions to the exercises, as the books were translated before the engines became really strong. Mark had many hundreds of updates that did not make it into the books.

4. The Art of Manoeuvring

Mark's last book also seems to be his most accessible. Placing your pieces on good squares is a simple shortcut to chess success.

5. Recognizing Your Opponent's Resources

An investigation of Mark's favourite topic of prophylaxis. Not as difficult as some of his other books, but still not easy by any means.

6. For Friends and Colleagues 1&2

Mark's autobiography. You will not improve your chess by reading this, but it is certainly fascinating.

7. Tragicomedy in the Endgame

(Joint 2012 ACP book of the year)

A companion to the *Endgame Manual*, this book shows how strong players often make mistakes in theoretical endgame positions. I know some people did not like the tone and concept of the tragicomedies, but to me the understanding that chess is difficult is so obvious that it does not have to be mentioned every time a strong player makes a mistake.

8. Studies for Practical Players

(Co-written with Oleg Pervakov)

Mark liked studies that resembled tournament play for their educational value. Here he joined up with one of the great study composers of our time.

9. Dvoretsky's Analytical Manual

When I published *Practical Chess Defence* in 2005, Mark praised the book and said that it was probably the most difficult book ever published; but his next book would be even more difficult. He was right. But there is certainly such a thing as too difficult. Yusupov advised that the book should be used for training games and not for solving. As such it is an excellent source of material, but the audience for this book is very limited.

Bonus Material

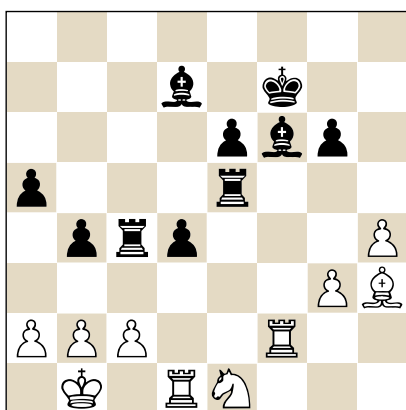
(Especially relevant for club players)

Dvoretsky did some videos for Chess24 this year, which you can access through their website, but it would be a mistake not to mention Artur Yusupov's now 10 training books, designed to help players go from 1200 to 2300 through small articles and accompanying exercises. You can see Dvoretsky's influence on every page. These are the books for club players Dvoretsky never wrote, but quite a lot of his examples and ideas went into them.



The Pawns are coming!

At the Olympiad in Baku, there was a game in the match between India and Ukraine that highlighted the typical psychology around connected passed pawns.



Sethuraman-Korobov
Baku 2016 (9)
position after 31. dxe1

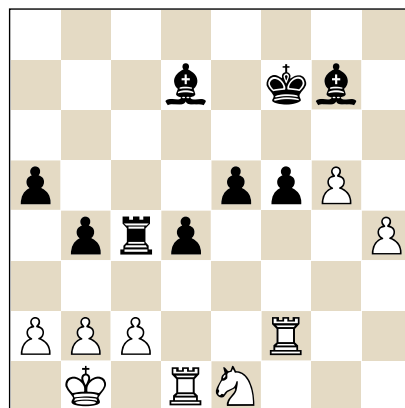
White seems to have a slightly more pleasant position. There are threats like d3, fdf1 etc., which look annoying, although Black can probably survive them. Instead, Black took a dramatically different approach: **31... f5!?** This must have been a bit of a shocker for White, who now played **32. e2** and it was a pretty tense situation. Eventually, with some help from White, Black won a crucial match, as you can read in Korobov's own notes in the previous issue.

Obviously, the critical continuation was 32. xf5 gxf5 and now White has many options. Black is clearly planning to go something like ...e5-e4, and even though they aren't connected passed pawns, the black pawns serve to illustrate the point quite well.

33. g4!? is probably the kind of move White considered during the game: 33...e5! 34. g5 (34. gxf5 e4!, and these pawns are really annoying for White) 34... g7.

Connected passed pawns rolling together often seem like a deadly and unstoppable machine.

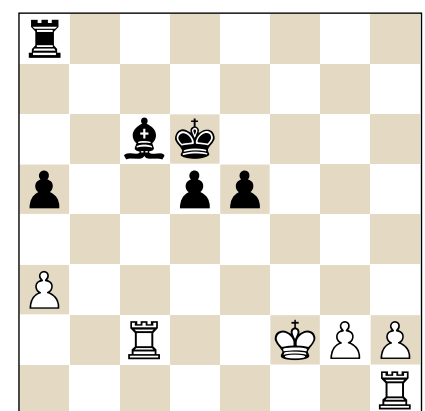
PARIMARJAN NEGI argues that keeping a clear head and concrete calculation are imperative if you want to take the sting out of these machines.



And now we have crazy connected passed pawns – similar to the games we will be seeing in this article. This would have been an interesting position to play, but you can understand why White felt worried about going for this. It clearly shows the inherent fear we have of such pawn formations. At the same time, if you look closely at the position – the black pawns can't really advance much further – after ...e4 White can just put the knight on f4, and his kingside pawns probably have a lot of potential as well. It certainly won't

be easy for White – the game would be very one-sided (unlike what he ended up playing...).

This shows the prevalent fears in the face of connected passed pawns. And it isn't completely unfounded – these pawns can be really dangerous. But, more crucially, it isn't easy to play against them. Let's consider a game which shows exactly what you shouldn't be doing. In this game, I instructively made the most common mistakes when faced with such a pawn horde. Basically, it felt like I was just flailing my pieces around the board without doing anything useful.



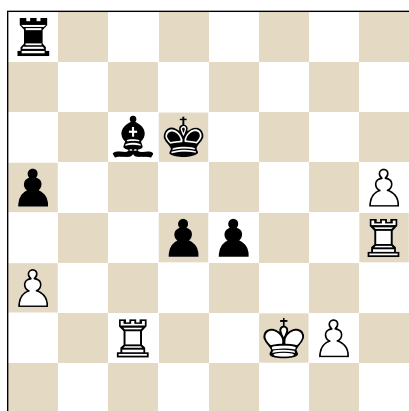
Negi-Rathnakaran
New Delhi 2007
position after 36... xc6

I had been winning for most of the game, and we ended up in this end-game, which looked close to winning... But I had a nagging doubt about the position. The central pawns – d5 and e5 – look scary. And I was getting a bit low on time. My first mistake was that I was terrified of his pawns starting to advance – so I didn't even try to calculate things properly. Instead, I tried to find some forced ways to avoid the pawn avalanche...

37. b1 Objectively speaking, this is the best move, but I feel that it would

have been easier to have gone for a simple plan – like pushing the h-pawn – and sticking with it.

One of the key things to realize in such positions is that if you can find a simple and straightforward plan – stick with it! Here, just pushing the h-pawn is nice and easy. And with a few calculations it is easy to see that the black pawns aren't such a danger after all. 37.h4! d4 (37...f8+!? 38.e1 f8 is an interesting way to try and mess up White's straightforward play... but this is certainly not easy to find for Black either) 38.h5 e4 (after 38...g8 39.e1! is a key move – but it's easy to calculate once you realize that White's priority is to keep pushing the h-pawn. Black can't really capture the g-pawn and ...g8 seems to be simply a wasted move). The strongest continuation here is the subtle 39.fh4!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This move might seem a bit hard to find – but the key to finding it is to realize the idea. White is trying to make it harder for Black to push his pawns, and fh4 does the job by adding pressure on the centre pawns with threats like fxd4. The exact lines aren't too hard to calculate. (I would also like to mention that from a practical standpoint White doesn't have to find the most precise moves. He could have just as easily gone for the straightforward 39.h6. This fits in nicely with the plan of pushing the h-pawn. It also shows that there isn't so much need to fear these connected passed pawns: 39...e3+ 40.e1 d3 41.f3 f5 might almost let Black escape, but here, too, Black needs to suffer for a draw: 42.h7 d2+ 43.e1

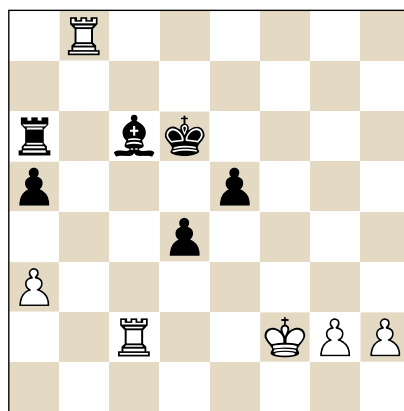
'My first mistake was that I was terrified of his pawns starting to advance – so I didn't even try to calculate things properly.'

a4+ 44.e2 d1 f+ 45.fxd1+ fxd1+ 46.fxd1 f8 47.fxe3. It's hard to make a technically accurate assessment here, but it is clear that Black will suffer.)

39...e5 40.h6 e3+ 41.e1. The king is safe here. Now threats like fh5 or fxc6 make Black's life hell. Also note how White's rooks will have a fairly easy time dealing with these pawns if they are coordinated well: 41...d3 42.fh5+ e6 43.fxc4, and the pawns will fall.

37...fa6 Stopping the direct threat of fb6. Now the white rook is somewhat misplaced on b1... After ...d4 we will have to waste another move with it. Practically, this is slightly annoying, although, as the computer points out, White is probably still winning.

38.f8 d4

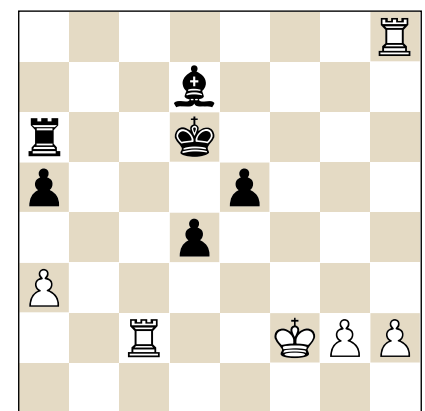


39.fh8? I just spent three moves to put the rook in front of my pawn! As you must all have heard – the rook is ideally placed behind the pawn. Of course my idea was that the rook felt more active here and I was obsessively trying to use my rooks somehow. I wasn't even considering pushing my pawns.

If I hadn't been so afraid of Black pushing his pawns, and if I had taken a bit of

time to do some elementary calculations, I would probably have realized that the pawns can't really be pushed at all: 39.h4! e4? (instead, 39...e4 or 39...d7 is perhaps a better way. White is probably winning but of course he must make sure to place his rooks correctly) 40.f8+! d7 (40...e5 41.fxc5+, and the pawns fall) 41.fxc4!. A very typical way to go after the pawns. Now Black can't hold on to both pawns. He has to go for 41...e7 42.fxd7+! fxd7 43.fxd4+, and this should be simply winning for White.

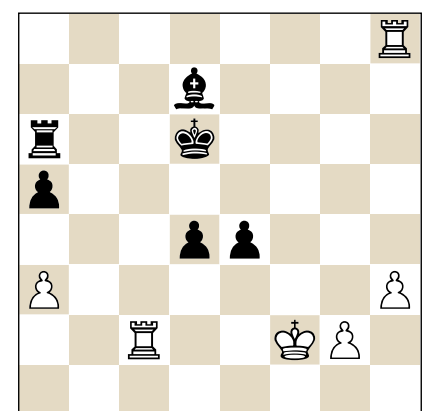
39...d7!



The bishop feels better placed there – it avoids the fd8 threats, and I have also given Black the option of activating the a6-rook on b6. Now I realized I couldn't really stop ...e4 and made the most ridiculous decision one can imagine:

40.h3? I just didn't consider pushing my pawns, because I was too worried about his... After 40.h4 e4! 41.fh6+ e6 42.fg6!? White's play is pretty subtle and I don't think it is easy to win this.

40...e4!



Now the pawns are getting more scary. Of course, White is still OK (even win-

ning, according to the engine, but I don't believe it's easy) but my panic had reached an all-time high:

41. ♖g3? I guess I just wanted to stop the pawns rolling with a check.

41. ♖h6+ had to be played. I thought I could play it on the next move, but that was a simple miscalculation.

41...d3 42. ♖h6+ ♔d5! Now the pawns are really unstoppable. In the last few moves I have managed to misplace all of my pieces, while Black just played either only or obvious moves!

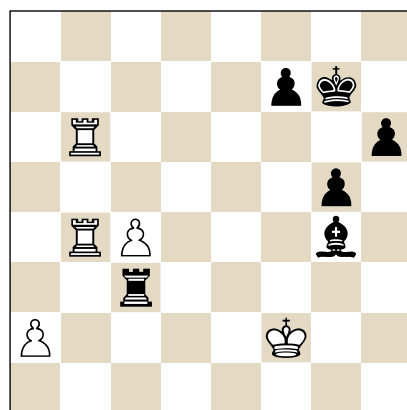
43. ♖h5+ ♔d4 44. ♖c7 ♖d6 0-1.

While I didn't have too much time, it certainly should have been quite enough to do the simple calculations needed in this game. I spent a while after this loss thinking about how I could have gone so wrong. I realized it was intricately connected to the state of my mind during the game. Basically, I could reduce its lesson to the following few points:

1. I was petrified that the pawns were going to start rolling and would be impossible to stop. This was definitely the most crucial factor. I spent so much time thinking about how to stop them from advancing that I didn't even consider simple plans like just pushing my own h-pawn. This is the biggest hurdle to progress! As we will see, it is often possible to block the pawns in many creative ways even if they are really advanced.

2. I did not calculate concretely enough. My calculations were clouded by the fears described above and weren't quite accurate. Even when things look intimidating, there often is a very simple solution to the problem. For instance, in the game above, after he played ...d4, ...e4 wasn't really a threat because of the ♖d8+ / ♔d7 / ♖c4! idea. Quite easy to calculate, but I didn't even try!

A few years later, I got an eerily similar type of endgame in the German Bundesliga. This time it was much more complicated – but the above lessons applied surprisingly well.

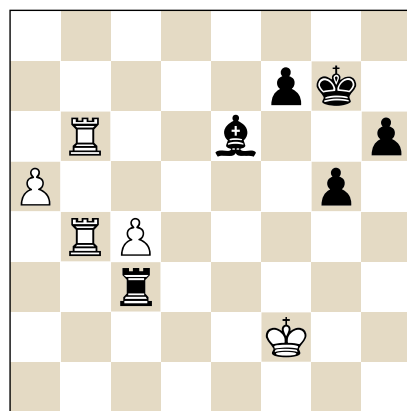


Negi-Melkumyan
Germany Bundesliga 2011/12
position after 41... ♔xg4

We had just made the time-control and had time enough, but I soon realized that it was impossible to calculate anything here. There seem to be so many options for both sides! And the black pawns had the potential to become really scary, reminding me of the game you just saw above. In the end, I decided to do something I never did in my previous game – create counterplay with my own pawns.

42.a4! ♔e6 The move looks natural enough – Black does want to push both the g- and h-pawns after all. And he seems to attack the c4-pawn as well. At the same time, moves like 42...h5 were also very interesting.

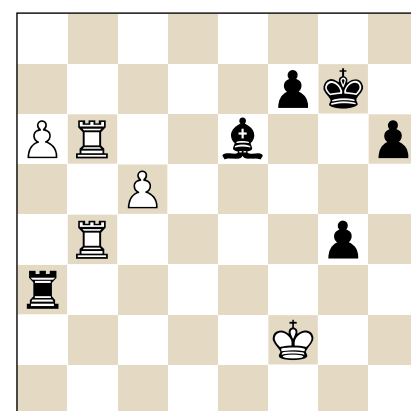
43.a5!



43... ♖a3? 44. ♖a4 looked like a scary threat, so this is understandable... but then why play 42... ♔e6 on the previous move at all? It serves no purpose. It was time for some very precise calculations instead: 43...g4! 44.a6. Possibly not the strongest move, but clearly the critical line: 44... ♔xc4!. White can't go after the c4-bishop with ♖c6, because Black is threatening ...g3+ and

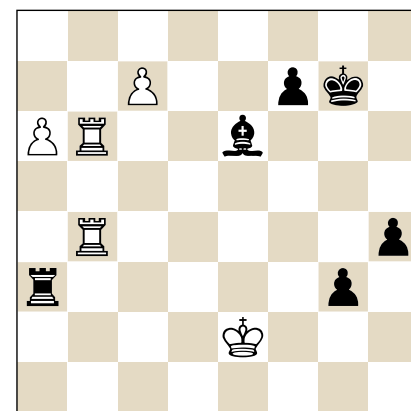
some bishop checks: 45. ♖a4. The only way to really continue trying to use the a-pawn. Black's pawns look scary, but again, no need to get scared: 45...g3+ 46. ♔g1 ♔d5 47. ♖b1, and Black can hang on, although it's certainly not easy to draw. The white rooks can be very annoying – with moves like ♖a5 – and the pawn on a6 is scary as well.

44.a6 g4 45.c5!



It is still hard to do the calculations here, but I saw the crucial idea that after ...g3+ I can go ♔e2, and for now there is no scary stuff happening on the kingside. Now Black needs to come up with some sophisticated defensive plans, but he just continued to calculate sloppily, and that wasn't enough.

45...h5 46.c6 h4 47.c7 g3+ 48. ♔e2!



The black pawns have advanced, but they are way behind White's.

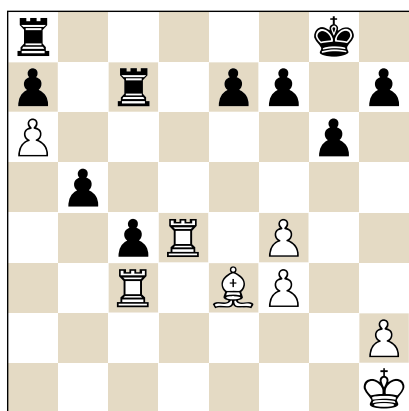
48...g2 49. ♔f2 h3 50. ♖xe6 ♖g3 51. ♖e1 h2 52. ♖bb1 1-0.

The advancing kingside pawns looked threatening again, and the position was a bit too complicated to calculate everything – but I still tried to calculate some concrete lines.

On the other hand, he seemed to be playing the natural moves but without really calculating precisely (...♔e6, ...♙a3, etc.)... and that clearly made a big difference!

I have to admit things are probably a bit easier if you have passed pawns to push. And one obvious lesson from the above games was – push your own pawns as well! But what do you do without passed pawns?

I think the lessons above still apply. One of the key things while defending against such pawns is to be able to block them nicely. There may be many creative ways to block such pawns – but the key to finding them is to not be afraid of them. And obviously, very concrete calculation is again crucial. In the next game, note how White follows these points perfectly.



Cossin-Abergel

Caen 2011

position after 27...♙c7

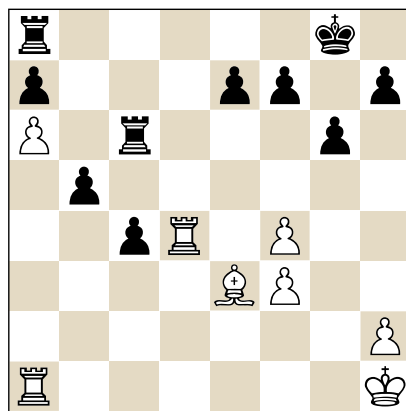
Black has three pawns for the piece – which should give him decent compensation. But the a6-pawn looks a bit shaky... and all White's other pawns are really ugly too! Meanwhile, Black seems almost ready to start rolling his pawns on the queenside...

28.♙c1! As ...b4 wasn't even a threat, this is a bit counterintuitive. But White just transfers his rook back because it is a lot more flexible there – it can go to b1 to prevent the b5-pawn from advancing further, or even to a1 to protect the a6-pawn!

28...♙c6 28...♙ac8 29.♙b1!, and Black struggles to keep his pawns. Interesting was 28...♙b8!?, prepar-

ing against ♙b1, but here the problem is that the rooks are awkwardly placed and White can start annoying Black with 29.f5!?. After 29...♙c6 the position does remain very messy, though. From our perspective, it's crucial to note that the bulk of black pawns are still hard to push and we can simply ignore them for now. For instance: 30.♙d7 ♙xa6 31.♙xe7, potentially also creating some threats on the kingside later with ♙d4 or ♙h6...

29.♙a1!

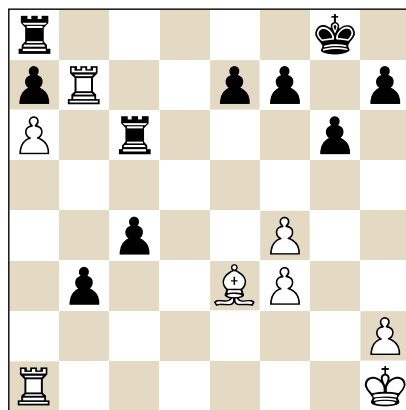


Again, it seems so counterintuitive to be so passive with the rook! It allows Black to start pushing his pawns, but White crucially realizes that he has a way to block them while keeping his rooks active.

29...b4 30.♙d7! b3 31.♙b7!

A typical blocking motif from behind. The pawns are temporarily paralysed.

31.♙xa7 ♙xa7 32.♙xa7 b2 33.♙f1 ♙xa6, and Black shouldn't have any trouble holding this.

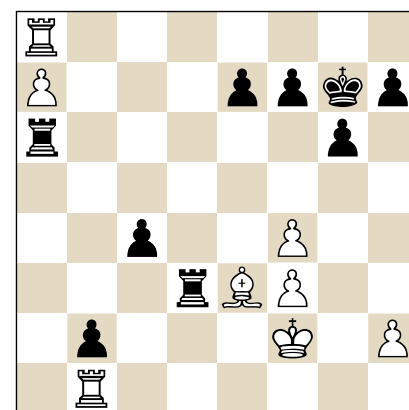


31...♙d8? Black is just thinking about pushing his pawns – and with ...♙dd6 he hopes to force the white rook away from the b3-pawn.

The best way was to prepare against White's a-pawn first by getting the king away from the 8th rank. It seems to waste

a couple of moves, but White's pieces are kind of stuck holding the position in place, so he can't really exploit it: 31...f6! 32.♙g2 ♙f7 33.♙g3!. The best move, surprisingly, is to hide the white king as well! – the idea is aimed against the ...♙d8/...♙dd6 plan again. Now White wants to go ♙xa7, avoiding stuff like ...♙d2+. The position remains very complicated and messy.

32.♙g2 ♙dd6 33.♙xa7! b2 34.♙b1 ♙d3 After 34...c3 35.♙a8+! ♙g7 36.a7 c2 37.♙xb2, ...c1 isn't actually a queening threat! And the a7-pawn is crushing. **35.♙a8+ ♙g7 36.a7! ♙a6 37.♙f2!**



Just in time. **37...c3 38.♙c8** Again we see a nice motif of the rook stopping the pawns from behind. This line was really not too hard to calculate when Black played the ...♙d8/...♙dd6 plan, but the advanced black pawns can be so blinding that it's easy to forget that they are just pawns after all. Now it's all over. **38...♙xe3 39.♙xe3 ♙a1 40.a8 ♙xb1 41.♙g8+ 1-0.**

Here we saw a different lesson for the side with the pawns. It's easy to get enamoured by your beautiful and deadly pawns, which may lead to overestimating your position or not calculating precisely enough.

Conclusion:

■ Do not be afraid of connected passed pawns! This is by far the most important factor to consider when playing against them.

■ Keep trying to calculate concrete lines – even if it seems that there are too many options, or the pawns are advancing too far. This goes for both sides! It is very easy to assume that the pawns will take care of themselves, but you need to be on the lookout constantly. ■

A new face and a familiar one

As part of the ‘Chess in the Museums’ project of the Russian Chess Federation, the 2016 Super Final of the national championship took place in the Museum of Local Lore in Novosibirsk, Siberia. In the absence of a number of favourites, an open fight was expected in the men’s competition, but few had foreseen the sensational winner.

Riazantsev and Kosteniuk win Russian Super Finals

Maybe we shouldn’t be too surprised that Alexander Riazantsev won the Russian Super Final, even if he only had the 8th rating in a field of 12. After all, Riazantsev is one of the coaches of the Russian women’s team. And coaches working for the Russian Chess Federation tend to do exceptionally well on the rare occasions that they are allowed time to suspend their training activities and play a tournament for themselves.

In the past years, Russian coaches have been particularly successful in the European Individual Championship. Vladimir Potkin won in 2011, Alexander Motylev in 2014, and Evgeny Najer became European champion last year. And this same Najer also won this year’s Aeroflot Open in Moscow.

Still, it is hard to imagine that Riazantsev saw himself as one of the favourites when he flew to Novosibirsk, the third most populous city in Russia after Moscow and St. Petersburg, for this year’s Super Final. True, Vladimir Kramnik didn’t take part, and neither did Sergey Karjakin and Ian Nepomniachtchi, but many-times champion Peter Svidler was there, and so were former champion Alexander Grischuk and last year’s champion Evgeny Tomashevsky.

But none of the top-seeds managed to set a firm pace and after 7 rounds, half of the field was in first place with a plus-one score, including 31-year-old Alexander Riazantsev, who so far had not played any classical games in 2016!

And at the outset of the 11th and last round, Riazantsev was still

doing fine and was in shared first place, with plus-two, together with Vladimir Fedoseev. While on the final day Fedoseev lost to debutant Grigoriy Oparin, Riazantsev rose to the occasion and defeated the solid Dmitry Jakovenko with the black pieces to claim what is arguably his biggest success to date.



NOTES BY

Alexander Riazantsev

Dmitry Jakovenko
Alexander Riazantsev
 Novosibirsk 2016
 Caro-Kann

This was the third time I played in the Super-Final of the Russian Champi-



The participants in the Super Final in Novosibirsk not only fought for a prize-fund but also for a car, a new model Renault. One day after the event, the keys to the cars were handed to the two winners, Alexandra Kosteniuk and Alexander Riazantsev, in Moscow.

VLADIMIR BARSKY

onship, after I had first participated in 2008 and 2009. Because of my coaching activities for the Russian Chess Federation I did not have enough time for serious preparation. Only six days before the Super-Final we still had a session of the Grandmasters' Children's Centre.

So my main goal in the tournament was just to enjoy being part of it and playing some games against top GMs. In the first round, I beat GM Dmitry Bocharov and then, after some draws, I finally also beat GM Kokarev. I was the leader going into the final round, together with GM Fedoseev, while there were four guys with half a point less, so pretty much everybody could become Champion.

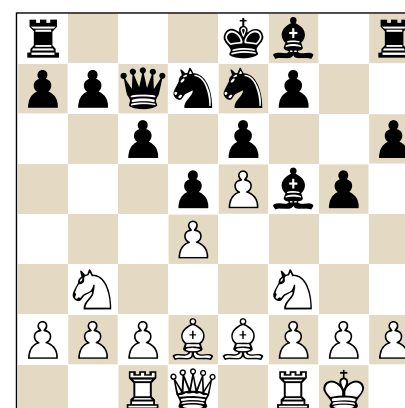
In my last game, with black against GM Jakovenko, I decided to just play chess and try to take my chances.

I knew that my opponent would probably play 1.e4, but I spent only 15-20 minutes on my preparation. I decided to play the line that appeared in the game only at 12.00 p.m. (the final round started at 13.00 hrs. and at 12.30 hrs. was the departure of the participants from the hotel to the venue). I had a choice of several options, but I finally decided to play an aggressive line with ...h6 and ...g5. As I did not have enough time to repeat all lines, I was on my own after White's 10th move, 10.♖c1.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♞e7 6.0-0 h6 7.♞bd2 ♞d7 8.♞b3 ♚c7 9.♙d2 g5

This was the first time Dmitry thought about his next move. Perhaps he was recalling his analysis, because he came up with a really logical move.

10.♖c1

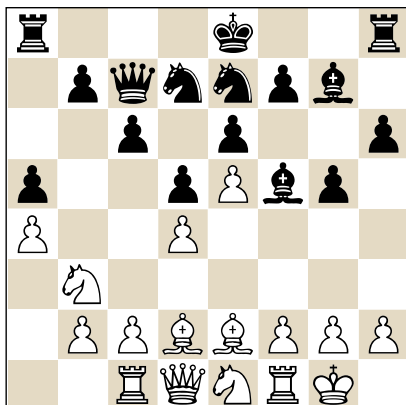


10...a5

The right decision. If Black plays 10...♙g7 immediately, he has to watch out for 11.♙b4 a5 12.♙d6 ♚d8 13.♞c5, with a white edge.

Too risky is 10...0-0-0?!, in view of 11.♙a5!, a typical idea to weaken the c6-point: 11...b6 12.♙d2 f6 13.exf6 ♞g6 14.c4, with clearly better chances for White.

11.a4 ♖g7 12.♗e1



This is a new move. White wants to play f4 to demolish the black kingside, when the black king may come under attack.

12...c5

During the game I thought that this was a very logical move, because the white knight doesn't control the centre. But my home analysis showed that it has some tactical disadvantages. Yet, it is not so easy to find them when you feel pressure from the clock, the importance of the last game and tiredness.

Dubious was 12...f6?! 13.♗h5+ ♔d8 14.f4, and White should be happy, and the same goes for 12...b6?! 13.f4 c5 14.c4.

Castling kingside would give White nice options: 12...0-0, and now, after 13.f4 gxf4, he can choose between 14.♗d3, 14.♗xf4 and 14.♗f3.

13.c3

I had spent 30 minutes on my previous move, but Dmitry replied much faster. However, I think that that was the only advantage of the text-move.

Better, and more in line with the position, was 13.c4! cxd4 (White would not mind 13...dxc4 14.♖xc4 b6 15.f4), and now 14.♗xd4! (much more dangerous than 14.cxd5), and so my first thought was to play 14...dxc4, but then, after 15.♗b5! (15.♗xc4 ♕d8) 15...♕b8 16.♗d6+ ♖f8 17.f4! (the strongest) 17...gxf4 18.♗xc4 ♕a7+ 19.♗e3! fxe3 20.♕xd7 b6 21.♕d4, White's position is better, since he has a nice initiative.

14...0-0? was not good either because

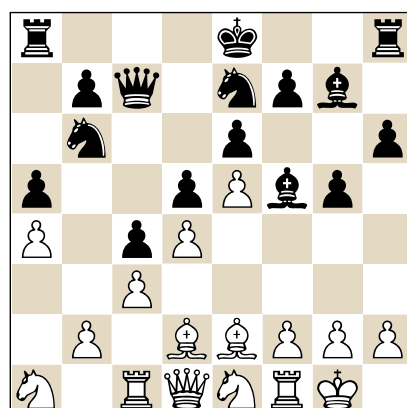
of 15.♗xf5 ♗xf5 16.cxd5 ♕xe5 17.♗c3!, but this was not so easy to see. Now, after 17...♕xd5? (17...♗d4 leaves White with a clear advantage after 18.♗xd4 ♕xd4 19.dxe6 ♕xd1 20.exf7+ ♖xf7 21.♗xd1) 18.♕xd5 exd5 19.♗g4, White wins a piece and that should be enough.

When I played 12... c5, I thought that besides playing 14... dxc4, I could also take on e5, missing White's 16.g4!: 14...♕xe5? 15.♗c3 0-0 16.g4!, and White should win.

13...c4 14.♗a1 ♗b6

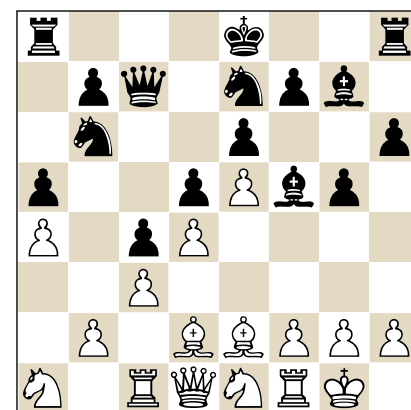
'I knew that my opponent would probably play 1.e4, but I spent only 15-20 minutes on my preparation.'

This move prevents the comeback of the knight from the a1-square, as White has to keep an eye on the pawn on a4.



15.b3

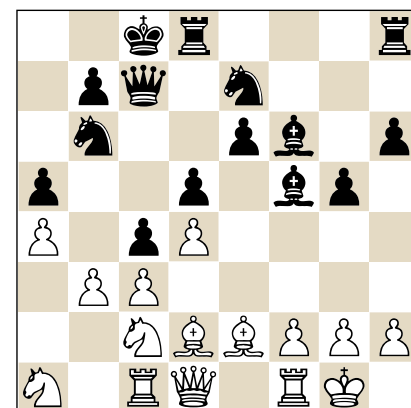
I was mainly focused on 15.f4, when after 15...gxf4 16.♗xf4 ♗g6 17.♗e3 Black has to choose between 17...0-0 and 17...♕c6, as 17...0-0-0 doesn't work now because of 18.♗ac2! ♗xa4 19.♗a3 ♗xb2 20.♕d2 ♗a4 21.♖xf5! exf5 22.♗b5, with a white advantage.



15...0-0-0?!

I made this move under the influence of the lines after 15.f4. I was thinking about the implications of that move while Dmitry was deciding on his 15th move, and when he played 15.b3, I chose to hide my king on the queenside anyway. At this point I had only 22 minutes left, while Dmitry had 52. But instead of looking at the queenside, castling kingside would already have given me easy play and the initiative, since the knight on a1 is still out of play and far from the kingside, the main theatre of the action: 15...0-0 16.f4 gxf4 17.♗xf4 (17.♖xf4 f6) 17...♗g6 18.♗e3 (18.♗g3 ♖ac8!) 18...f6 19.exf6 ♖xf6 20.♗f3 ♖af8, and Black is better.

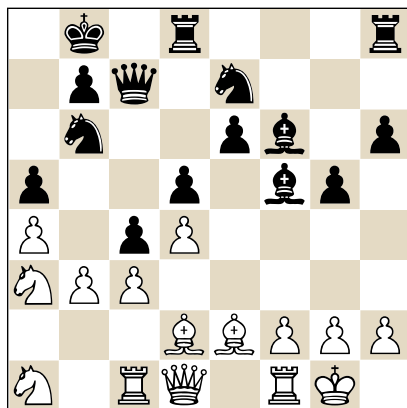
16.♗ec2 f6 17.exf6 ♗xf6



18.♗a3 An interesting plan was to play this knight to e3 and the other one to a3: 18.♗e3! ♗g6 19.bxc4 dxc4 20.♗ac2! ♗e8 21.♖a1 e5 22.♗a3! exd4 23.cxd4 ♖xd4 24.♗exc4 ♗xc4 25.♗xc4 ♗c6 26.♖c1. White has made progress on the queenside, while Black hasn't achieved anything on the kingside.

18...♖b8

Probably best was to play 18...♔c6!?, for instance: 19.♙f3 ♕d7 20.♖e1 h5 21.bxc4 dxc4 22.♘1c2 ♕xa4 23.♙xh5 ♘ed5 24.♙g4, and White is only slightly better, but I didn't have enough time for such complicated decisions.



19.♙e3?

This move surprised me, as it is too slow. The right plan was to take the pawn on c4 and to bring the a1-knight into play.

19...♘ec8 20.♘b5 ♕d7 21.♕d2

♘d6 22.♘xd6 ♕xd6

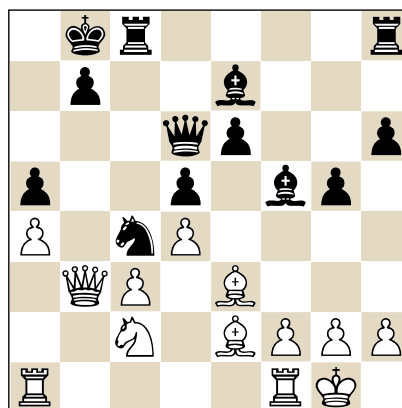
After the exchange of the b5-knight only Black can claim an advantage.

23.♕b2 ♖c8 24.♘c2 ♙e7! 25.♖a1

25.♖b1 ♕d7 26.♖a1 cxb3 27.♕xb3 ♘c4 28.♖fc1 ♙d6 is good for Black.

25...cxb3 26.♕xb3 ♘c4

Here 26...♕c7 was better: 27.♖fc1 ♙d6 28.h3 ♘c4 and Black is on top.

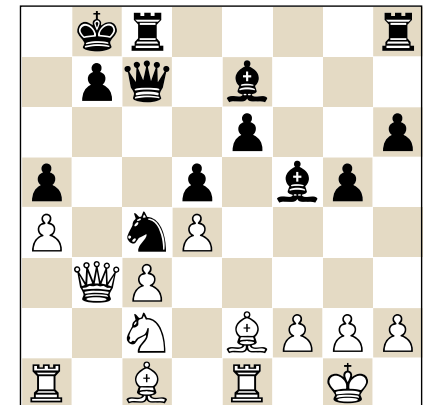


27.♙c1!?

White had to give up the bishop and take on c4 in order to control the

a3-square, so the knight can go to b5: 27.♙xc4 ♖xc4 28.♘a3 ♖c6 29.f3 h5 30.♘b5 ♕d8, with an unclear position.

27...♕c7 28.♖e1



28...♖h7!?

During the game I had no doubts that this move was the best one! It is a multi-faceted move that stops White from playing 29.♘a3, as after 29...♘xa3 30.♙xa3 ♕xc3, the bishop on e7 is protected by the rook. Additionally, the rook may protect the

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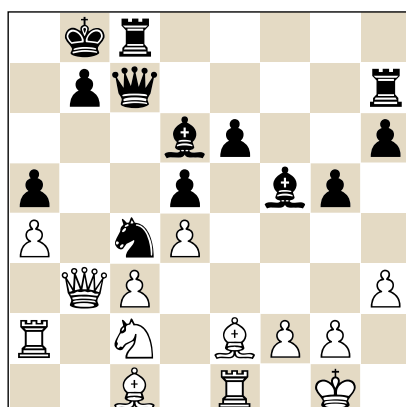


b7-square, and finally Black will have the opportunity to double the rooks on the h-file. Nevertheless, home analysis showed that it was not the strongest move.

Best was 28...♙d6, as can be illustrated by the following two lines: 29.h3 ♖hg8! 30.♗e3 ♗xe3 31.♙xe3 h5 32.♙xh5 ♙h2+ 33.♗f1 ♖h7!! 34.♙g4 ♙d3+ 35.♖e2 ♙f4, and White is in big trouble. Or 29.g3 h5! 30.♗a3 h4 31.♗b5 hxg3! 32.♗xc7 gxf2+ 33.♗xf2 ♖xh2+ 34.♗g1 ♙e4 35.♗a6+ ♗a7 36.♙f3 ♙xf3 37.♖a2 ♖h1+ 38.♗f2 ♖f8 39.♖xh1 ♙d1+, and Black wins.

29.♖a2 White should have taken the knight: 29.♙xc4! ♖xc4 30.♖xc4 ♖xc4 31.♗e3 ♖xc3 32.♙d2 ♖c6 33.♗xf5 exf5 34.♖e5!, and this strong move, which I had not seen during the game, draws.

29...♙d6 30.h3



30...h5!? We both were in time-trouble and I decided to start my attack. **31.♗e3?**

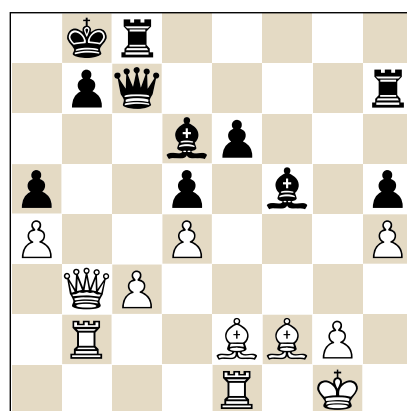
This loses. Also insufficient was

31.♙xg5? ♖g7 32.h4 ♙h2+ 33.♗h1 ♖xg5 34.hxg5 ♗d2 35.♖b2 ♗e4 36.♖f1 ♖f4 37.♗e1 ♗xf2+ 38.♖xf2 ♖xf2 39.♗xh2 ♖h4+ 40.♗g1 ♖xe1+ 41.♙f1 ♖xc3, and Black wins. Necessary was 31.♙xc4!, when after 31...dxc4 32.♖b5 g4 33.h4 g3 34.f3 e5 35.♙g5 the position is still tricky.

31...♗e3 32.♙xe3 g4 33.h4 g3

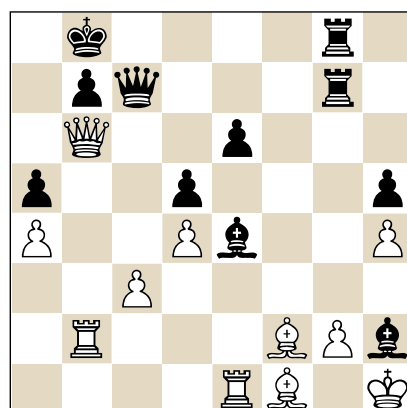
Without giving White any respite.

34.♖b2 gxf2+ 35.♙xf2



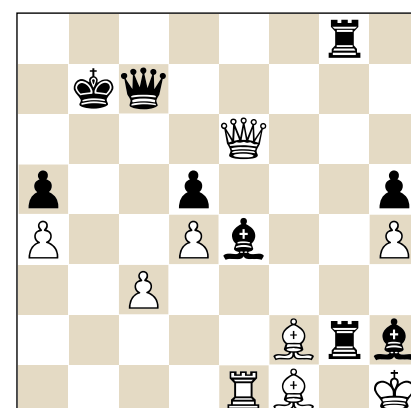
35...♙e4! Showing no interest in the pawn. But of course, 35...♖xc3 was also winning.

36.♖b6 ♖g8 37.♙f1 ♙h2+! 38.♗h1 ♖hg7



39.♖xe6? This loses immediately, but it was not easy to come up with good advice for White. Best was to sacrifice the rook on e4, when Black still needs to play accurately: 39.♖xe4 dxe4 40.♖xe6 ♖f4! 41.♖d5 ♖c8! 42.c4 (42.♖xh5 e3, winning) 42...♖e8 43.c5 e3 44.♙a6 ♖e4, and White can resign.

39...♖xg2 40.♖xb7+ ♗xb7



The time control had been reached and White resigned in view of 41.♖b1+ ♙xb1 42.♖xd5+ ♖c6 43.♙xg2 ♖xg2 44.♖xc6+ ♗xc6 45.♗xg2 ♙c7, and Black wins.

The game contains some mistakes, but it was very complicated and sharp. I was happy to end the Championship with a spectacular and exciting game.

■ ■ ■

The women's championship was won by Alexandra Kosteniuk, who outperformed her rating by some 100 points. Of course there was a fair chance that the title would be claimed by one of the members of the Russian women's team that Riazantsev coaches, but Kosteniuk's victory must have elicited an extra smile from him, as they also worked together on an individual basis from 2010 to 2013.

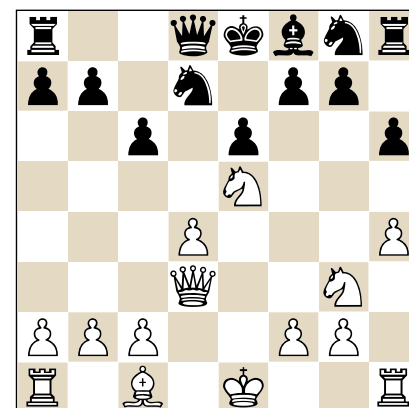
As a former World Champion and first board of the Russian team, Kosteniuk was obviously one of the top favourites, but in fact she left her rivals gasping for breath right from the start and secured the title with one round to go. When we asked her to annotate her best game, Alexandra Kosteniuk kindly sent us the

Novosibirsk 2016 (men)

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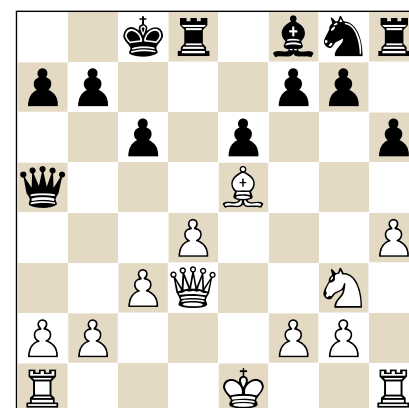
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		TPR
1	Alexander Riazantsev	IGM	RUS	2651	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	7	2788
2	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2752	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	½	6½	2742
3	Evgeny Tomashevsky	IGM	RUS	2724	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	6½	2744
4	Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2745	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	6	2714
5	Vladimir Fedoseev	IGM	RUS	2665	½	½	½	½	*	0	½	1	½	½	½	1	6	2721
6	Grigoriy Oparin	IGM	RUS	2617	½	0	½	½	1	*	1	½	½	0	½	½	5½	2689
7	Aleksey Goganov	IGM	RUS	2635	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	1	½	½	½	5½	2688
8	Nikita Vitiugov	IGM	RUS	2721	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	5½	2680
9	Dmitry Jakovenko	IGM	RUS	2714	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	*	1	½	1	5½	2680
10	Ernesto Inarkiev	IGM	RUS	2732	½	½	0	0	½	1	½	½	0	*	½	1	5	2643
11	Dmitry Kokarev	IGM	RUS	2636	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	4½	2622
12	Dmitry Bocharov	IGM	RUS	2611	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	0	½	*	2½	2479

h6 7. ♘f3 e6 8. ♗e5 ♙h7 9. ♙d3
♙xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♘d7

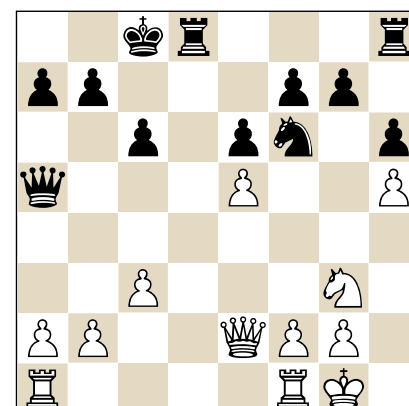


Valentina chose a line that I hadn't quite expected from her, so I decided not to go for the main theory after 11.f4, the move I had played in the 2015 Russian Championship, but instead opted for a more positional line.

11. ♙f4 ♘xe5 12. ♙xe5 ♖a5+
13. c3 0-0-0



14. ♖e2 During the game it seemed to me that I had mostly analysed 14. ♖f3 at home, but I wasn't sure what would happen after 14...f6 15. ♙f4 ♖xd4, as it turns out that White gets very good compensation after 16.0-0 ♖d8 17. ♖g4 f5 18. ♖e2.
14... ♗f6 15.0-0 ♙d6 16.h5 ♙xe5
17.dxe5



Alexandra Kosteniuk: 'I hope the reader will excuse me this briefness. They say, after all, that brevity is the soul of wit.'

following lines and subsequent game.

'I won my first Russian women's championship in May 2005, more than 11 years ago, in the city of Samara. I scored 9 out of 11 and did not lose a single game. It was my only gold in the Russian Championships.

'Since 2004 we have a closed tournament called the Super Final. This is the last stage of several qualification tournaments that include regional championships and the Russian Higher League, and in which almost all of the best chess players of the country (men and women) take part.

'There are tournaments that go well right from the very beginning and Novosibirsk was clearly such a tournament for me. I started with a perfect 4 out of 4, and even a shaky 'middlegame' of 1 out of 3 and a nerve-racking ending didn't spoil this perfect start.

'The organization in Novosibirsk was great. We played in the Novosibirsk Museum of Local Lore and the hotel where we stayed was within walking distance from the playing hall. The championship was another part of the "Chess in Museums" project of the Russian Chess Federation together with the Charity Fund of Elena and Gennady Timchenko. This project started back in 2012,

when the World Championship match between Anand and Gelfand took place in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, and ever since there have been various Russian chess tournaments in museums.

'My perfect start helped me a lot in winning the title, which is why I decided to comment one of my wins with the white pieces from those early rounds, my game against Valentina Gunina from Round 2. The comments aren't long, since the game was rather short. Furthermore, other tournaments are coming up soon and I feel that I need to leave the Super Final behind me (although it's such a nice feeling to savour a win). So, I hope the reader will excuse me this briefness. They say, after all, that brevity is the soul of wit.'



NOTES BY
Alexandra Kosteniuk

Alexandra Kosteniuk
Valentina Gunina
Novosibirsk 2016 (2)
Caro-Kann

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘d2 dxe4
4. ♘xe4 ♙f5 5. ♘g3 ♙g6 6.h4

This is the pawn structure that I was aiming for when I went for this line. I didn't remember any concrete lines, but recalled that in some games Black had problems when facing this kind of structure.

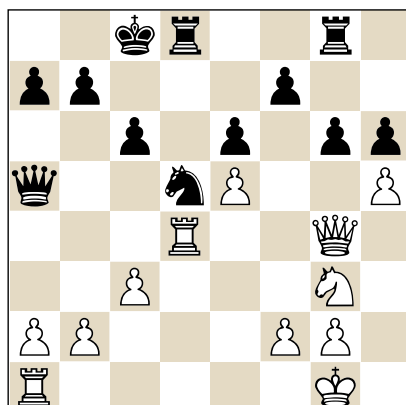
17...♘d5 18.♔g4

I wasn't quite sure if I really needed to move the queen. I thought that I might start with doubling the rooks on the d-file with 18.♖fd1!? at once, but it is still not so clear.

18...♖hg8 19.♖fd1

What I liked about this position was its simplicity. It's very easy to play for White and my plan is quite obvious: first I am going to double my rooks on the d-file, and then I will most likely play on both sides, using the fact that Black needs to protect the pawns on the kingside, while her king on the queenside cannot feel totally secure.

19...g6 20.♖d4



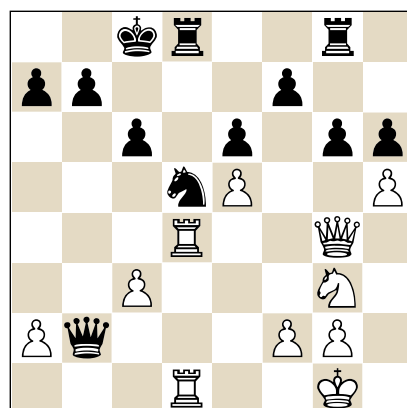
20...♔b6? This is already a very serious mistake. Black should have

tried to stop White from doubling the rooks with 20...♔c7!?, forcing White to spend time on the protection of the central pawn.

21.♖ad1!

Simple and strong.

21...♔xb2



22.♔f3?!

Much stronger was first taking 22.hxg6, and now, after 22...♖xg6 23.♔f3 c5 24.♖4d2 ♔b5, either 25.♘e4 or 25.♘f5 would give White excellent compensation, for example 25...exf5 26.♖xd5 ♖xd5 27.♔xd5 ♔e8 28.♔xc5+.

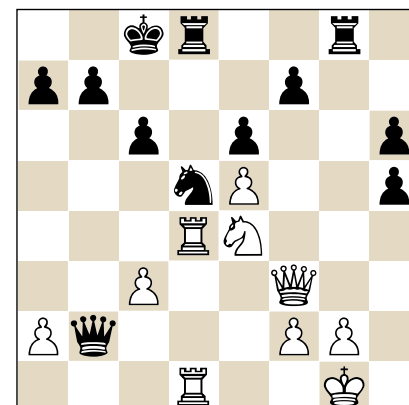
22...gxh5?

Black should have played 22...♘xc3!, even though it seems that after 23.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 24.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 25.♔xf7 gxh5 26.♔xe6, White has excellent winning chances due to the weakness of the black king and the central passed pawn on e5.

In fact, it was exactly at this point that I ended my calculations, thinking that White had a large advantage.

But the computer thinks otherwise – showing 0.00 after at least two moves for Black: 26...♘d5 and 26...♔c1+.

23.♘e4



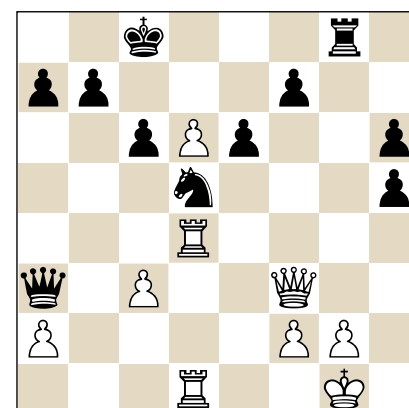
23...♔a3? Again not the best move. 23...♖df8 cannot be suggested, since the d-file is the vital artery of the position: 24.c4 ♘b6 25.a4! ♘xa4 26.c5, and the position once again proves the correctness of the saying 'a knight on the rim is dim'.

More tenacious was 23...♖gf8 24.c4 ♘b6 25.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26.♘d6+ ♔b8 27.♔xf7 ♘xc4 28.♔e7! (forcing the black queen to protect the rook) 28...♔b6 29.♔xe6 ♘xd6 30.exd6, and the protected passed pawn on d6 will be an annoying thorn in Black's side for the rest of the game.

24.♘d6+ ♖xd6

24...♔b8 doesn't look very helpful, as after 25.♔xf7 ♔a6 26.♖b1 ♘b6 27.♔xe6 White dominates the game.

25.exd6



Black doesn't have time to consolidate the position and loses pretty fast.

25...f5 26.♔xh5 ♔xd6 27.c4 ♘f6 28.♔f7 ♖f8 29.♔xf6

Black resigned. A quite short, but very important win. ■

Novosibirsk 2016 (women)

cat. VIII

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TPR		
1	Alexandra Kosteniuk	IGM	RUS	2537	*	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	8½	2643
2	Natalija Pogonina	WGM	RUS	2484	1	*	1	0	½	½	1	½	½	1	1	0	7	2539
3	Anastasia Bodnaruk	IM	RUS	2463	0	0	*	½	½	1	1	0	1	1	½	1	6½	2504
4	Daria Charochkina	IM	RUS	2366	½	1	½	*	0	0	1	1	½	0	½	1	6	2484
5	Olga Girya	WGM	RUS	2446	½	½	½	1	*	½	0	0	½	1	½	1	6	2477
6	Daria Pustovoitova	FM	RUS	2386	0	½	0	1	½	*	0	½	½	1	1	1	6	2482
7	Valentina Gunina	IGM	RUS	2535	0	0	0	0	1	1	*	1	0	1	1	1	6	2468
8	Evgenija Ovod	IM	RUS	2362	0	½	1	0	1	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	5½	2448
9	Aleksandra Goryachkina	WGM	RUS	2460	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	0	½	1	5	2403
10	Alisa Galliamova	IM	RUS	2450	½	0	0	1	0	0	0	½	1	*	0	1	4	2338
11	Alina Kashlinskaya	IM	RUS	2462	0	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	1	*	0	3½	2306
12	Ekaterina Ubiennykh	WM	RUS	2346	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	*	2	2188



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HOUDINI 5

The magician is back! With the latest version of his top chess program, Houdini 5, Robert Houdart has succeeded in catapulting himself back into the inner circle of computer chess, all while managing to maintain the unique and individual character of his engine.

Its release took some time, with it now being almost three years since the appearance of its predecessor - but the wait has certainly been worth it! Houdini 5 brings a rejuvenated and reinvigorated engine to the board, weighing in at a staggering 200 Elo points stronger than Houdini 4! This represents a practically inconceivable jump in playing strength by today's standards, and one that programmer Robert Houdart was only able to achieve by implementing a range of new techniques and ideas.

A decisive factor here is the completely redesigned evaluation function, which has been retuned to better take king safety and piece play into account. Houdini's unique playing style is the result of a cunning combination of aggressive playing ideas and healthy positional and strategic understanding. What makes playing and analysing with Houdini 5 particularly exciting is the sheer plethora of ideas it comes up with - the program has all the hallmarks of unbridled creativity. Where other engines see no way to make progress, or head towards a draw, not infrequently, Houdini conjures up hidden and surprising resources!

As opposed to its predecessor, Houdini 5 is more selective when arriving at candidate moves, which enables it to reach higher search depths. This modification pays off in all stages of the game, but particularly so when it comes to the endgame. For perfect endgame play, Houdini 5 can use the Syzygy-Tablebases* (available on 4 DVDs as "Endgame Turbo 4") combined with the Nalimov Tablebases, and is thus always able to find the quickest way to mate.* Houdini 5 also uses the "lazy SMP" algorithm, meaning it is able to achieve better results on multi-processor systems than ever before.

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Recommended: PC Intel i5 (Quadcore), 8 GB RAM, Windows 10 or 8.1, DirectX10, graphics card with 512 MB RAM or more, 100% DirectX10-compatible sound card, Windows Media Player 11, DVD-ROM drive and internet access.

* Tablebases are not included in the delivery of Houdini 5

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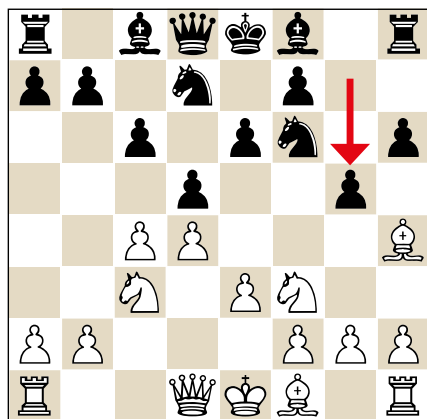




Spice Up Your Queen's Gambit – Play like Grischuk and Carlsen



Jeroen Bosch



7...g5!?

‘Black’s kingside weaknesses are counterbalanced by his dark-squared bishop and possible dynamic play on the kingside.’

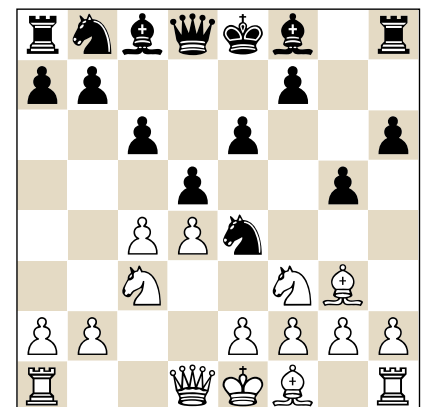
The Queen’s Gambit is a popular opening on the highest level. It has a solid reputation and a sound strategic foundation. Indeed, it has often been said that without a profound understanding of the Queen’s Gambit it’s impossible to become World Champion in our royal game. This column, however, is devoted to a much more audacious interpretation of the Queen’s Gambit that has only recently come to the fore. It starts with the risky strategy to hunt White’s dark-squared bishop with ...h6, ...g5, and ...h5. Black thus succeeds in ‘winning’ the bishop pair, but it comes at a price: the light squares f5 and h5 are seriously weakened. At the highest level this line has been played by Carlsen, Grischuk and Fressinet. Let’s see what these guys have cooked up by looking at Babula-Grischuk from the 2016 Baku Olympiad.

Vlastimil Babula
Alexander Grischuk
Baku 2016

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 The game starts off as a Slav, but will soon transpose into a Queen’s Gambit. Another move order to reach a position later in the game is 2...e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♕g5 c6 7.e3 h6 8.♕h4 g5 9.♕g3 ♗h5. **3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♕g5** In the 2014 blitz World Championship, Carlsen went

so far as to answer Grischuk’s 5.♕f4 with 5...♗bd7 6.e3 ♗h5!? 7.♕g5 ♕e7 8.♕xe7 ♖xe7 9.♕d3, Grischuk-Carlsen, Dubai blitz 2014. The game ended in a draw, though White has a slight but clear edge of course. **5...♗bd7** Instead 5...dxc4 6.e4 b5 is the highly theoretical Botvinnik Variation.

Another Carlsen experiment that deserves mentioning while we are looking at (by)ways to spice up the Queen’s Gambit is 5...h6 6.♕h4 (6.♕xf6 ♖xf6 is the Moscow Variation) 6...g5!? (6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♕g3 b5 is the so-called anti-Moscow Gambit, a strategically risky line that you can’t play without learning loads of theory) 7.♕g3 ♗e4!?.



Now, 8.e3 ♗xg3 9.hxg3 ♗d7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♕d3 ♕g7 would actually transpose to our main game, while 8.♗d2 ♗xg3 9.hxg3 ♕g7 10.e3 a6 11.♕d3 b5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♖c1 ♗d7 14.f4 ♕b7 15.♗f3 ♖c8 16.0-0 g4 17.♗e5 h5 was pretty decent for Black

in Grischuk-Kramnik, Moscow blitz 2008.

The sharp 8. ♖xe4!? was played in Vachier-Lagrave-Carlsen, Stavanger 2015: 8... dxe4 9. ♘d2 ♙xd4 10. e3 ♙xb2. White has sacrificed two pawns, and certainly has compensation but no edge. The game quickly ended in a repetition after 11. ♖b1 ♙c3 12. ♙e2 ♘d7 13. 0-0 ♘c5 14. ♘b3 ♘d3 15. ♘d2 ♘c5 16. ♘b3 ♘d3 17. ♘d2 ♘c5 ½-½.

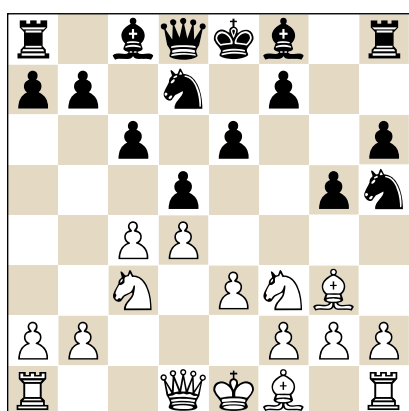
6.e3 h6 The Cambridge Springs with 6... ♙a5 is still a respectable Queen's Gambit. Now we are about to enter more virgin territory.

7. ♙h4 Innocuous is 7. ♙xf6 because of 7... ♘xf6 and with two bishops Black is fine. 7... ♙xf6, as played in this move order in Onischuk-Stripunsky, New York 2006, is the Moscow Variation.

If you want to stick with the present SOS-line, then you can answer 7. ♙f4 with 7... g5 8. ♙g3 ♘h5. However, 7... ♘h5 must be a good option too, if you consider the comment on move 5 – ...h7-h6 is a useful addition!

7...g5 That's the plan. No solid 7... ♙e7 for us, we're after that bishop!

8. ♙g3 ♘h5



9. cxd5 It's logical to fix the pawn structure, considering that Black has just weakened his kingside. White isn't forced to take on d5, though. It makes sense to annoy Black with 9. ♙e5!?

In practice 9... ♖g8?! has been tried: 10. cxd5 exd5 11. h3 ♘xe5 12. ♘xe5 (12. dxe5 ♘g7 or 12... ♙b6 gives Black enough chances too) 12... ♘f6 13. ♙d3 ♙d6 14. ♘g4 ♖h8!? 15. ♙f3 ♙xg4

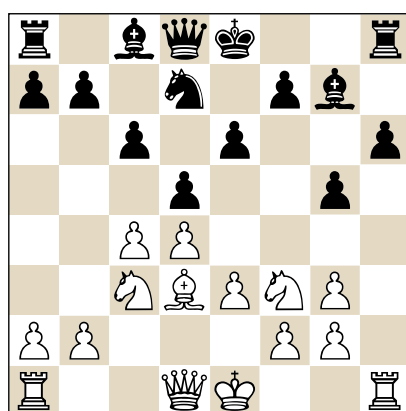
(15... ♘xg4 16. hxg4 ♙e6 17. 0-0-0±) 16. hxg4 ♙e7 17. ♙f5 was a bit better for White in Khusnutdinov-Jumabayev, Almaty 2016, although things aren't all that bad after 17... ♙b4, to increase control over square e4. However, White can improve with 10. h3 ♘xe5 11. ♘xe5 ♘f6 and now 12. ♙f3! ♙d6 13. 0-0-0.

Just bad after 9. ♙e5 is 9... f6?, because of 10. ♘d2 or 10. ♙d3.

Pretty OK looks 9... ♘xe5 10. ♘xe5 ♘f6!?, to answer 11. h4 with 11... ♘d7! (11... ♙g7 12. hxg5 hxg5 13. ♖xh8+ ♙xh8 14. ♙f3 is very pleasant for White) 12. hxg5 ♘xe5 13. dxe5 ♙xg5 14. ♖h5, which is possibly a bit better for White, but Black will always have chances with his dark-squared bishop.

A subtle alternative is 9... ♘hf6, when 10. ♙g3 ♘h5 repeats, so White should take the knight, 10. ♙xf6, when 10... ♙xf6 should favour White – in the Moscow Variation they play the restrained ...g7-g6 after all – but it's certainly playable. However, 10... ♘xf6 makes sense too. Just don't forget to answer 11. ♘e5 with 11... ♘d7!.

After 9. ♙d3 ♘xg3 10. hxg3 ♙g7



practice has seen White preparing to castle queenside:

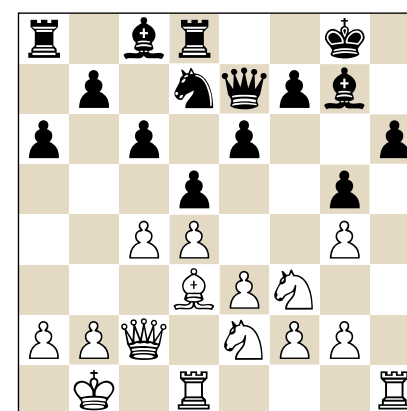
■ 11. ♙c2 ♙e7 12. 0-0-0, and now:

– 12... a6!? is an interesting option.

– It's risky to open the position when you are behind in development, so I am not so sure about Artemiev's 12... dxc4?! 13. ♙xc4 a6 14. ♙d3 (14. ♙b1 b5 15. ♙e2 ♙b7 16. ♘e4, to plunge a knight on c5, looks like a safe edge). The (blitz!) game went 14... c5?! 15. d5!

♘b6 16. d6 ♙d8 17. ♙e4 ♙d7 18. g4?! (18. ♘d2 should favour White) 18... ♘c4! 19. ♙b3 ♘a5 20. ♙c2 ♖c8 (avoiding a repetition) 21. ♙b1 b5 22. ♘d2 b4 23. ♘e2 c4 and Black won with a battery over the long diagonal, Vitiugov-Artemiev, Sochi blitz 2016. I would prefer 14... b5!? (instead of 14... c5) 15. g4 (15. ♙b1 ♙b7 is dynamic enough – Black will manage to play ...c5 at some point; 15. ♘e5 ♘xe5 16. dxe5 ♙xe5 17. ♘xb5 ♖b8! 18. ♘d4 ♙d7 demonstrates why Black was so keen on the dark-squared bishop – plenty of counterchances!) 15... ♙b7 16. ♘e4 0-0 17. ♙b1 ♖fd8 18. ♘fd2 c5! 19. dxc5 ♙d5 and with ... ♖ac8 coming up Black seems fine.

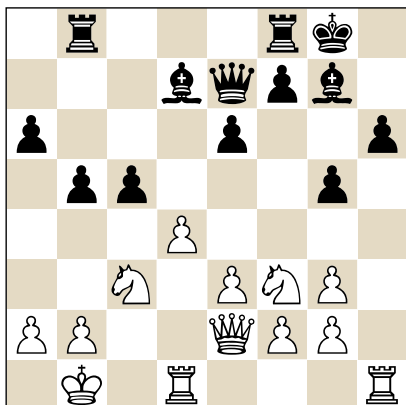
– Fressinet played 12... 0-0, not afraid of ghosts (a kingside attack): 13. g4 ♖d8 14. ♙b1 (14. cxd5 should be answered by 14... cxd5 as 14... exd5 15. ♙h7+ ♙f8 16. ♙f5 is strategically risky: those holes on f5 and h5 again) 14... a6 15. ♘e2



15... dxc4! (the right time to open the game for the bishops) 16. ♙h7+ (16. ♙xc4 c5) 16... ♙f8 17. ♙xc4 ♘f6 18. ♙c2 ♘xg4! (why not?) 19. ♘g3 ♙d7 20. ♙e2 ♘f6 21. ♙c2 c5 22. ♘e5 ♙c6 (22... ♖ac8) 23. ♙g6 (an empty shot, but 23. ♘xc6 bxc6 and the opposite-coloured bishops will mean that Black obtains an attack) 23... ♙e8 24. ♙c2 ♖ac8 25. ♙f3 ♙c7 26. ♙b3 cxd4 27. exd4 ♙c6, with a pawn and a superior position in Donchenko-Fressinet, Drancy 2016.

■ A 2016 online blitz game between Grischuk and Carlsen went 11. ♙e2 ♙e7 12. 0-0-0 a6 13. ♙b1 (again you should answer 13. cxd5 with 13...

cx d5) and now 13...dxc4! 14.♙xc4 b5 15.♙d3 c5 16.♙e4 ♖b8 17.♙c6 0-0 18.♙xd7 ♙xd7.

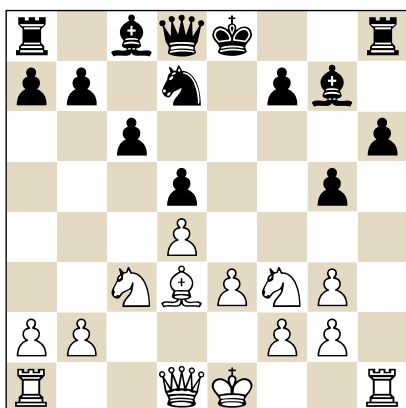


Black is very well placed now, Grischuk-Carlsen, ICC blitz 2016.

9...exd5 Black can also take the bishop, when 9...♗xg3 10.hxg3 exd5 11.♙d3 would transpose to our main game.

10.♙d3 10.♙e5 ♗g7 11.♙d3 g4 12.♗d2 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 h5 14.e4 d4 15.♗e2 ♗e6 favoured Black in Ratkovic-Ivanisevic, Belgrade 2015. White should have gone 12.♙xg7! ♙xg7 13.♗g1!, planning 14.♗ge2, which favours White, who can start probing the weakened light squares on the kingside. Therefore 10...♗xe5, or even 10...♗hf6, intending to take on e5, should be played. This is similar to the comments after 9.♙e5.

10...♗xg3 11.hxg3 ♙g7



Most of the games cited below have reached this position via 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5 c6 7.e3 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♙g3 ♗h5 10.♙d3 ♗xg3 11.hxg3 ♙g7. White now faces the choice where to hide his king: on the kingside or on the queenside?

Interlude

Before we continue with Babula-Grischuk (which went 12.0-0), we will first look at the alternative, which is to castle queenside by playing **12.♙c2**, when Black has several playable options.

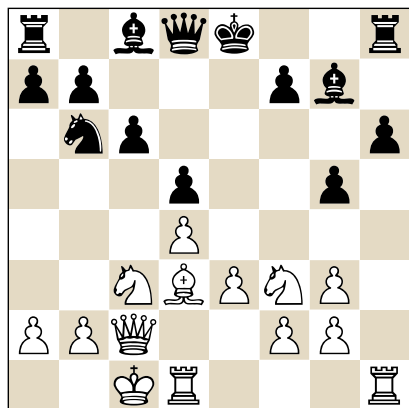
12...♗b6 It's important to note that 12...0-0?! is inaccurate, due to 13.♙h7+! ♗h8 14.♙f5 ♗b6 15.♖h5! ♙xf5 16.♙xf5 and now the ugly 16...f6 is forced, when after 17.0-0-0 ♙d7 18.g4 White had fully taken advantage of Black's risky strategy in Lombardy-Petursson, Reykjavik 1978.

Playable alternatives are:

– 12...♙e7 13.0-0-0 ♗f6 (here 13...♗b6 14.e4 dxe4 15.♗xe4 ♙e6 16.♗c5 0-0-0 17.♖he1 is a slight edge for White) 14.♗e5 ♗g4! 15.♗xg4 ♙xg4 16.♖d2 ♙e6 17.♗b1 ♖c8 18.♙f5 0-0 19.♗a4 b6 (19...c5! 20.♙xe6 fxe6 21.dxc5 b5) 20.♖c1 c5 favoured Black in Rubio Mejia-Laznicka, Monzon 2016.

– 12...a5 13.0-0-0 (13.♙f5 ♗b6 14.b3 ♙e7 15.0-0 ♙xf5 16.♙xf5 ♗c8! 17.♙c2 ♗d6, and with the knight on its optimal square in the Queen's Gambit, Black is at least equal, Batchimeg-Gavrilov, Pardubice 2016) 13...♗b6 14.♗e5 ♙xe5 15.dxe5 ♙e7 16.f4 ♙g4 was fairly OK in Brunner-Libiszewski, Drancy 2016.

13.0-0-0 Innocuous is 13.♙f5 ♙xf5 14.♙xf5 ♗c4 15.0-0-0 ♗d6! 16.♙c2 ♙e7, Al Sayed-Gundavaa, Baku 2016.

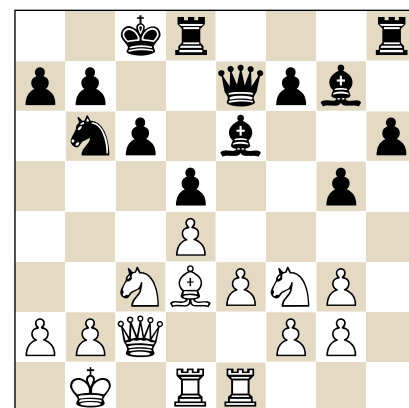


13...♙e6 14.♗b1 Too laborious is the knight manoeuvre 14.♗d2 ♙e7 15.♗b3 0-0-0 16.♗b1 ♗b8 17.♖c1 and now Black got enough counterplay with 17...h5 18.♗c5 h4 19.gxh4

♖xh4 20.♖xh4 gxh4 in Chatalbashev-Petkov, Pleven 2016.

14...♙e7 15.♖he1 15.♗e5 0-0-0 16.f4 looks imposing, perhaps, but Black has no problems. In the blitz game Brodsky-Khismatullin, Sochi 2015, the second player managed to stress the superiority of his strategy in an impressive way: 16...♗b8 17.♗a4 ♗xa4 18.♙xa4 ♖he8 19.♖c1 ♖c8 20.♖he1 f6! 21.♗f3 ♙f8! 22.a3 ♙g7! 23.f5 ♙g8 24.♗d2 ♙c7 (White's kingside is weak, while he has no attack on the queenside) 25.♗f1 h5 26.♖c3 ♙d6 27.♖b3 ♗a8 28.♖c1 ♙h7! 29.♗a1 ♙d7 30.♖bc3 ♙xf5, with a sound pawn up.

15...0-0-0

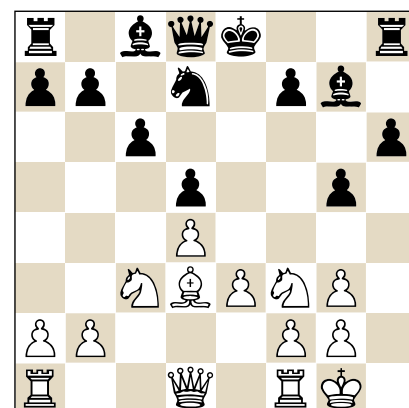


16.♗d2 16.♗a4 ♗xa4 17.♙xa4 ♗b8 is equal. **16...♗b8 17.♗b3 h5!** Black has his own counterplay and is at least equal. **18.♗c5 h4 19.gxh4 ♖xh4 20.♙b3 ♖h2 21.♙f1 ♙f5+ 22.♗a1** Miroiu-Jianu, Arad 2016, and now 22...♙c7 would have preserved an edge. Instead, the game went 22...♙f8?! 23.e4!, with equality.

(Continued)

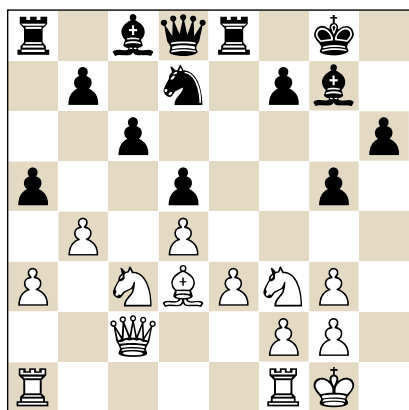
Now let's continue with Babula-Grischuk:

12.0-0



12...♘b6

The most natural continuation, but in this year's edition of Wijk aan Zee the World Champion went 12...a5!? 13.a3 0-0 14.♖c2 ♜e8 15.b4



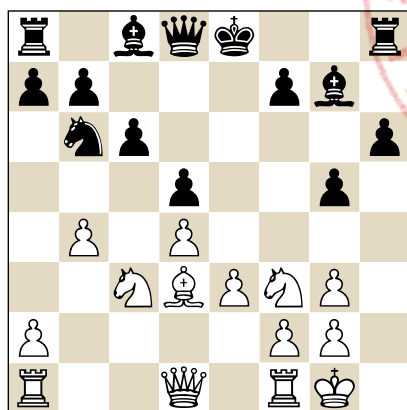
and now Carlsen played the powerful 15...b5! to fully equalize. This may look ugly, but it prevents the minority attack and aims to manoeuvre the knight to c4.

In his recent book *Timman's Titans* (New In Chess 2016), the Dutch grandmaster notes in a somewhat similar position from the Queen's Gambit that it was Petrosian who came up with this revolutionary idea (Benko-Petrosian, Los Angeles 1963). 16.♘a2 ♙b7 17.bxa5 ♜xa5 18.♘b4 ♖a8 19.♙h7+ ♜h8 20.♙f5 ♘b6. The knight is ready to jump to c4. Navara understandably forces matters to reach a draw: 21.♘e5!? ♙xe5 22.dxe5 ♘c4 23.♖c3! ♜xa3 24.♖d4 c5! 25.♜xa3 cxd4 26.♜xa8 ♜xa8 27.exd4 ♜a4 28.♜b1 ♘d2 29.♜b2 ♘c4 30.♜b1 ♘d2 31.♜b2 ♘c4, ½-½, Navara-Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2016.

13.b4

Starting the minority attack.

Not very promising is the plan of pushing e3-e4: 13.♖c2 ♙e6 14.♜fe1 0-0 15.e4 dxe4 16.♙xe4 ♘d5?! (16...♜e8!) 17.♙f5 (White should interpolate the check if he wants to trade bishops: 17.♙h7+! ♜h8 18.♙f5) 17...♘b4 18.♖b1 ♙xf5 19.♖xf5 ♖c8 20.♖xc8?! ♜axc8 21.♜e7 ♜b8 and in this ending only Black can be better, Kozak-Erdős, Zalakaros 2016.

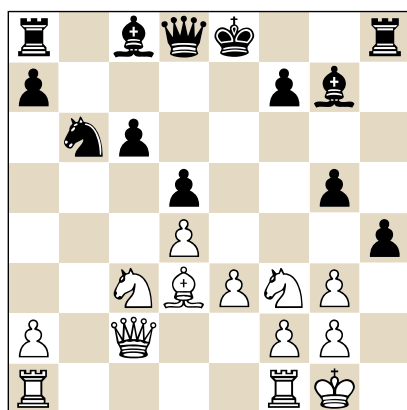


13...h5! Most people would have castled, but Grischuk goes all out (and all in as well)! Rather than thinking about his own king safety he is challenging White to think about his.

The conventional 13...0-0 14.♖c2 ♙e6 15.♘d2 ♖e7 16.a3 a5 17.♜ab1 axb4 18.♜xb4 ♘c8 19.♜fb1 ♘d6 gave Black a good (blitz!) game in Salem-Khismatullin, Berlin 2015. Also interesting is 13...♘c4!?

For now Babula and Grischuk continue to 'ignore' each other.

14.b5 h4! 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.♖c2 White is just worse after 16.gxh4 g4 17.♘g5 ♜xh4 18.f4 ♖e7 19.♖e1 ♜h6.



16...hxg3 Opening the position against White's king is logical, but please remember that Black's king is still stuck in the centre, too!

Black is also fine after 16...h3 17.♙f5 ♖f6 18.g4 ♙xf5 19.♖xf5 ♖xf5 20.gxf5 g4 (20...hxg2 21.♖xg2 ♘c4 is also good) 21.♘h2 ♜g8 22.gxh3 (22.♘g4 ♙xd4!) 22...gxh3 23.♖h1 ♙f8, with an unclear ending.

Black could keep the tension with either 16...♖f6 (intending to move to the queen to h6) or 16...♖f8 (prophy-

laxis against the opening of the position).

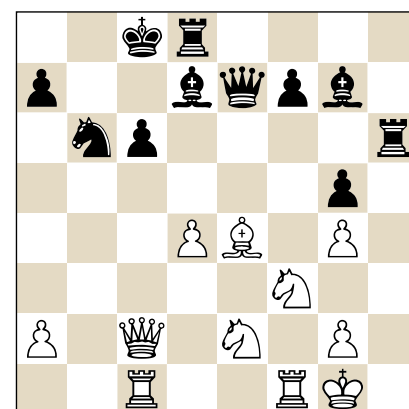
17.fxg3 ♖d6 18.♘e2 The sharp 18.e4 is playable too: 18...♖xg3 (18...g4 19.e5 ♖h6 20.♘h4 ♖e3+ 21.♖f2 ♙h6 22.♜ae1 ♖xf2+ 23.♜xf2 ♙e6 is about even) 19.exd5 and, as it goes in such lines, the engines see crazy draws everywhere.

18...♙d7! 19.♜ac1 Black is fine in the complex situation that arises after 19.♘g5?! ♖h6 20.♘f3 ♖xe3+ 21.♜f2 0-0-0 22.♙f5 ♘c4.

19...♖e7 Not 19...g4? 20.♘h4. **20.e4 dxe4 21.♙xe4 ♜h6** A good multi-purpose move.

22.g4 0-0-0 A great moment to castle! Strangely enough, play is about even after other moves too:

– 22...♖f8 23.♖c5 ♖xc5 24.dxc5 ♘d5 25.♘g5 ♙xg4 26.♜xf7+ ♖g8 27.♙f3! ♙xf3 28.♜xf3 ♜e8 29.♖f2 ♘f6.
– 22...♜d8 23.♙f5 ♙xf5 24.♖xf5 ♜d5 25.♖d3 ♖d6.



Now a draw is the likely result after the sharp 23.d5 ♙xg4 24.♙f5+ (24.dxc6 ♖c7! and the king is a good blockader!) 24...♙xf5 25.♖xf5+ ♖c7 26.♖xg5 ♖xg5 27.♘g5 ♜xd5 28.♜xf7+ ♜d7 29.♜xd7+ ♘xd7.

The game continued **23.♘g3 ♖b8** but the balance was not upset in the further course of the game. A draw was agreed on move 40.

In conclusion, we have seen that Black can spice up his Queen's Gambit with an early ...h6 and ...g5. His kingside weaknesses are counterbalanced by his dark-squared bishop and possible dynamic play on the kingside. So, why not stand on the shoulders of giants like Carlsen and Grischuk in your next game? ■



Hans Ree

Apart from being an annotated game collection, *Timman's Titans* beautifully portrays ten world champions, Jan Timman's own life and views on a bygone era. For **HANS REE** it evoked many memories.

In 1968, I played a short training match against Jan Timman. He was 16, I was 23 or 24 and Dutch champion. I remember that I was disappointed and angry at myself about the result, 2-2. I should have recognized that if a young boy – 16 was young in the chess world then – could overcome our seven year age-difference, it might mean that he was more talented than I, but that was far from my mind.

Jan progressed during the next years, but not at the speed that is common nowadays. In 1973, there was a tournament in Amsterdam where Donner, Timman, Sosonko and I played each other four times. Donner and I represented the Dutch old guard, Timman was the youngest of us and Sosonko was a newcomer who had immigrated to the Netherlands a year earlier.

For a brief moment we could cling to the illusion that the old guard still stood its ground, as Donner and I shared first place. But that illusion

Bohemia as a luxury

lasted only a short while. Soon the Dutch chess hierarchy would become evident: Timman first, then Sosonko, then a gap and then the rest.

A decade later Jan was more or less out of sight. In 1982 he was briefly second on the international rating list and most of the period between 1985 and 1990 he was third, after Kasparov and Karpov. But still Jan and I lived more or less in the same world. I still played against him in some Dutch events, and when he played his Candidates' matches, I was there as a reporter.

In Amsterdam, Jan was living near my place and we were seeing each other regularly, especially at the nearby artist club where we, like Donner and Sosonko, were members. Nowadays I don't see him often. Some years ago Jan moved to Arnhem. From Amsterdam that is only about an hour by train, but with the insularity typical of the inhabitants of a capital, Amsterdammers consider it Siberia.

Different morals

The subtitle of his recent book is 'My World Chess Champions'. This 'My' doesn't mean that he made an idiosyncratic selection; he gives all of them from Alekhine to Kasparov. 'My' means that he describes them from a personal point of view. Writing about the champions, he describes his own life and his views on life and chess.

In the introduction he mentions 'the romantic times when chess wasn't yet dominated by the computer'.

Of course, in his analyses he makes good use of the computer, but he isn't particularly fond of them. A few times he corrects old analyses by Kasparov, pointing out not only the obvious fact that Kasparov's computer of 2002 was much inferior to Jan's own 2015 product, but also that Kasparov sometimes would have been better off renouncing computer assistance and trusting his own intuition.

Will this go on, new generations of computers refuting the analyses of their ancestors? There will come a point where further improvements will be completely unintelligible and irrelevant to humans. Then the machines will go on perfecting their analyses, but only for their own pleasure.

Elaborating on the romantic times of yore, Jan writes later: 'I will never get tired stressing how different the morals in the 1960s and 1970s were from those of today. Smoking was held in high regard.' And drinking, you might add, and even Mikhail Tal's approaching the stewardess on a flight 'in a manner that did not agree with the puritan views of the country he was about to enter' (Jan means the U.S.A.) seems to be indulgently condoned.

A set in a Lisbon shop

In the winter of 2004, Timman is in Lisbon to give a lecture. In a little shop he buys a chess set. The shop owner asks for 150 dollars. 'I never like to haggle, and without further ado I took out some bank notes I had once earned somewhere in the

world, and put them on the counter in front of him.' The shop owner shoves them in his trouser pocket, pleasantly surprised, I presume. I like this nonchalant attitude to money, and for some time I have enjoyed the same nonchalance, but not as late as 2004.

After having paid for the set, Timman spotted a much more interesting one in the shop. It turned out to be a set that had been in the possession of Alekhine. Of course he bought it.

This is the theme of the first chapter. The sad death of Alekhine, the melancholy of a snowy Lisbon, his visit to a rather decrepit hotel Borges (I've stayed there, too, drawn by the name, at a time when it was still in decent shape) and the chess set that passed from Alekhine to Timman and will one day be in the hands, as he writes, of a top-level chess player who hasn't been born yet. Melancholy and the comfort of historical continuity are close companions in a chess player's life.

By the way, it's the mark of a fine writer to mention the hotel Borges and refrain from mentioning his meeting with the great Argentine writer of that name.

Never a networker

During a tournament in Reykjavik in 1972, Jan wore a fur coat that in the past he had also used as a sleeping bag. It was torn in many places, and Vlastimil Hort said: 'Someone must have been very angry at you.' Jan writes: 'Of course that was the difference: my generation hadn't lived through the war. For us, new clothes were nothing special. We liked rundown mopeds, shady cafés, alcohol and drugs. We lacked the realization that modest possessions could be a basic condition for life.'

Indeed, as he understands well, the carefree bohemian lifestyle of his youth was only possible in a world that was affluent and optimistic about the future. Hort (born 1944) didn't really live through the war, but he lived his younger years in Communist Czechoslovakia. Combining his chess career

with rundown mopeds, shady cafés, alcohol and drugs would hardly have been possible.

In 1969, Max Euwe, who played the role of a benevolent substitute-grandfather in Jan's life, arranged a training series for him in the Soviet Union that turned out to consist of a tournament in Vilnius. Jan's trainer Hans Bouwmeester said: 'You mustn't forget to send Euwe a picture postcard from Vilnius. That's something that he will

Euwe, professor of computer science, nor Jan's father, professor of mathematics, would have approved.

Woken by a Frisian nurse

There is another passage with which I have to take issue. In the final round of the 1978 Olympiad in Buenos Aires, the Netherlands were paired against the Soviet Union. Jan writes: 'Another member of our base team did drop out. Around 4.30 in the

'Ah, sweet walks in memory lane. After so many years even breaking a leg becomes a memory to cherish.'

very much appreciate, and it may be much to your benefit later on.'

When he heard that – 'much to your benefit later on' – Jan decided immediately that he wouldn't send that postcard. The ugly concept of 'networking' did not yet exist in the Netherlands, but to him it would have been anathema.

Later in that chapter I found something that set me thinking. He mentions a reception in the early 70s: 'Donner and Ree were talking to each other, when Euwe walked by and cheerfully informed them: "Have you heard the news? Frans Kuijpers (Dutch champion in 1963) has graduated." The two addressees did not react. Donner and Ree had never graduated, and had never showed any intention of doing so.'

From Jan this may have been a compliment, but I felt misjudged, as in fact I graduated in mathematics at the University of Amsterdam in 1970. But if Jan had never noticed that, you might say that it was quite a feat to graduate without even giving the impression of trying. But then again, such a frivolous attitude towards mathematics wouldn't be something to be proud of. Neither

morning, Hans Ree broke his leg in two places by falling off a bed. It happened in Heikki Westerinen's hotel room, where the alcohol had been flowing lavishly. I had left Heikki's hotel room one hour earlier, so I didn't appear entirely fit at the board either.'

All true, up to a point. But Jan makes it appear as if the party took place in the night before the final round. Let me state unequivocally that I would never break a leg at a party the night before a match against the mighty Soviet Union. There was a rest day before the final round, and in fact the accident occurred in the night before that rest day.

We were not that reckless. In those years Jan was well able to recover from alcoholic debauch in two days, and so was I, apart from breaking a leg, of course.

I was brought to the Hospital Alemán, sedated by opiates, and when I woke up the next day I was addressed in the Frisian language by a Dutch nurse, making me wonder if it all had really happened.

Ah, sweet walks in memory lane. After so many years even breaking a leg becomes a memory to cherish. ■

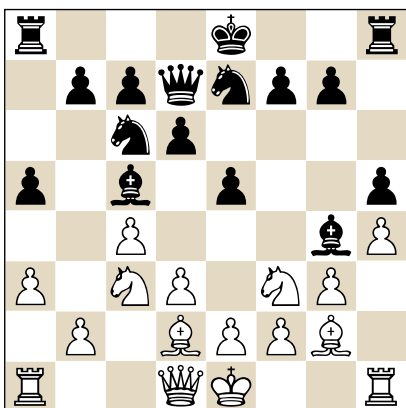


Bishops that don't budge...

... even if it means giving up the bishop pair and accepting doubled pawns to boot.

Van der Elburg-Popov
Rhodes 2013

1.c4 e5 2.g3 h5 3.h4 ♘c6 4.♙g2
♙c5 5.♘c3 d6 6.d3 ♙g4 7.♗f3
♗ge7 8.a3 a5 9.♙d2 ♙d7



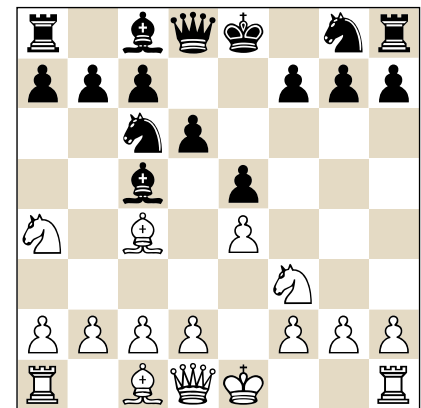
Here White went **10.♗a4**. And having just vacated square a7, Black obviously replied with **10...0-0** Uh, right. Black did not choose the automatic 10...♙a7 but allowed doubled c-pawns, giving up the bishop pair in the process: **11.♗xc5 dxc5**. Now you can see that these obvious drawbacks are balanced by other, no less traditional values: a half-open file with a possible outpost for the knight on d4. Moreover, Black has a slight space advantage, while White has a hard

time finding an effective plan, now that b2-b4 has been prevented. **12.♙c3 f6 13.b3 ♗ad8 14.♙d2 ♙e6 15.♙b2 ♗d4 16.♗g1?! Obviously with the intention of e2-e3, but this would leave the d-pawn an easy target on the half-open d-file. 16.♙xd4 cxd4 17.b4 may have been the strongest continuation, but it does not look very powerful. And anyway, this would also have fully justified Black's strategic decision on move 10. 16...b6 17.♗d1 ♙d6 18.♗d2 f5 19.e3 f4, with a clear initiative for Black, who went on to win. 20.gxf4 exf4 21.exd4 cxd4 22.♙xd4 ♙xd4 23.♙xd4 ♗xd4 24.♗f3 ♗d6 25.d4 ♗c6 26.d5 ♗e8+ 27.♙f1 ♗e5 28.♗d4 f3 29.♙h3 a4 30.♙xg4 hxg4 31.♗f5 axb3 32.♗xd6 cxd6 33.♙g1 ♗xc4 34.♗d3 ♗e1+ 35.♙h2 g3+ 36.fxg3 f2 0-1.**

The idea is not uncommon in English Opening lines in which Black's dark-squared bishop has ended up on c5 early on. The Open Games also feature the concept. Take, for instance, this Vienna line: 1.e4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.g3 ♙c5 5.♙g2 d6 6.d3 h6 7.♗a4 ♙e6 8.0-0 ♙d7 9.a3 ♙g4 10.♗xc5 dxc5, when again Black's trumps are central control and space. I also quite like Adams's original early attempt to spice up the play in the following game:

Can-Adams
Konya 2010

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.♗c3 d6 Breaking the symmetry early on and allowing, even tempting White to play: **5.♗a4**



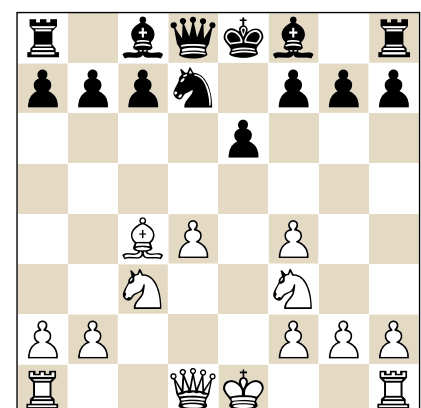
5...h6!? The meek 5...♙b6 was not part of Adams's plan. **6.♗xc5 dxc5 7.d3 ♗ge7 8.♙e3 ♙d6** The position remains closed, and White's pair of bishops remains only a theoretical advantage. **9.♗d2 b6 10.0-0 g5** Continuing his ambitious set-up, Adams stops f2-f4, which would have opened up the position for White's bishops. In the end, Black was rewarded for his audacious play (0-1, 31).

The funny thing is that you may encounter the same concept in every corner of the board.

Gelfand-Adams

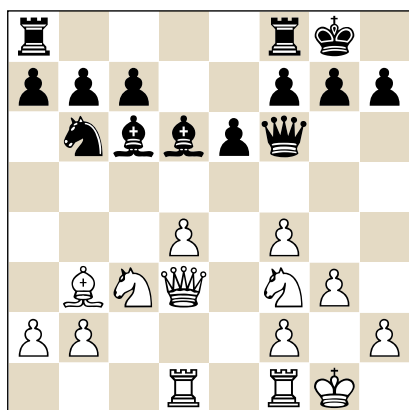
Paris/St Petersburg 2013

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.♗c3 ♗bd7 5.♙f4 dxc4 6.e3 ♗d5 7.♙xc4 ♗xf4 8.exf4



If you still think this 'controversial' idea is something new: Capablanca had this position on the board back in 1929. What's more, as Gelfand points out in *Dynamic Decision Making in Chess*, both Alekhine and Rubinstein often allowed this structure with White (just like you can find them in Gelfand's games with

Black in the English Opening). **8...♖b6** The immediate **8...♗d6** is what Menchik played against Botvinnik in 1934. She developed her other bishop to b7, which seems quite a valid and harmonious alternative. **9.♗b3 ♗d6 10.g3 ♗d7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♔d3 ♗c6 13.♖ad1 ♗f6**



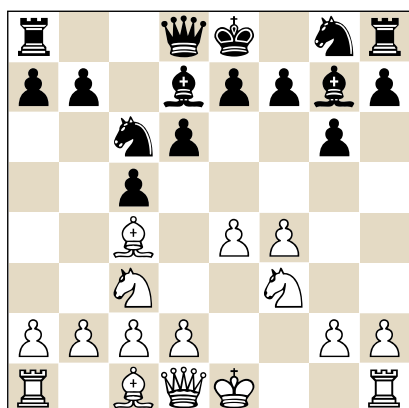
14.♗g5 14.♗e5 would have been the obvious continuation, but Gelfand opts for a liquidation, when surprisingly White's activity still compensated for his inferior pawn structure. **14...g6 15.♗ge4 ♗f5 16.d5 exd5 17.♗xd5 ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.♖xd5** Hard to predict, but after only eight more moves Black was a pawn down, while White had got rid of his doubled pawn. **20...♖fd8 21.♖c1 ♖ac8 22.♖c3 ♗e7 23.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 24.f5 ♗g7 25.♗d6 ♖b8 26.♗e8+ ♗f8 27.fxg6 hxg6 28.♗xc7** And Gelfand converted his advantage (1-0, 76).

And here is an example of White allowing the same thing on c4.

McShane-Wojtaszek

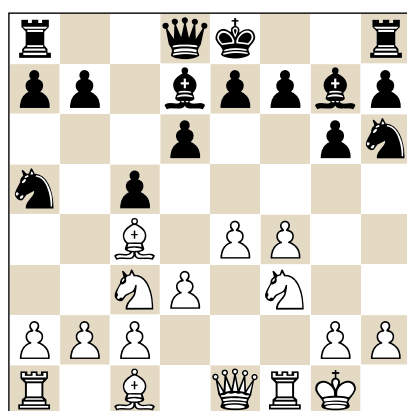
Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.e4 c5 2.♗c3 d6 3.f4 g6 4.♗f3 ♗g7 5.♗b5+ ♗d7 6.♗c4 ♗c6



'The funny thing is that you may encounter the same concept in every corner of the board.'

McShane, on his way to win the second group in Wijk aan Zee, did not bother creating space for his bishop with **7.a3**, but played the straightforward: **7.d3 7.0-0** is a sensible alternative that has been played many times. **7...♗a5 8.0-0** Allowing the Irish centre (see my column on tripled pawns in New In Chess 2015/6) – **8.♗d2** is the alternative to prevent this. **8...♗h6** Wojtaszek decides to refrain from **8...♗xc4 9.dxc4 ♗xc3 10.bxc3**, as was seen in a later blindfold game, Carlsen-Anand, Monaco 2011. **9.♗e1**



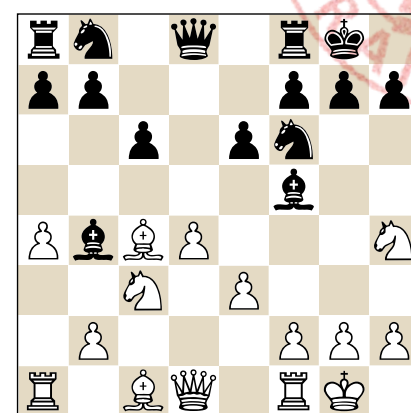
9...♗xc4 10.dxc4 f5 11.e5 ♗e6 Apparently, Black wants to avoid **11...0-0 12.e6**, but after **12.b3 ♗f7 13.exd6 ♗xd6 14.♗b2 0-0 15.♖f2!** White was comfortably pressing on the central files. The e6-bishop soon ended up on c8 and McShane scored a fine victory (1-0, 38).

Finally, diving into history again, we see a knight stepping to the edge to chase a bishop on f5.

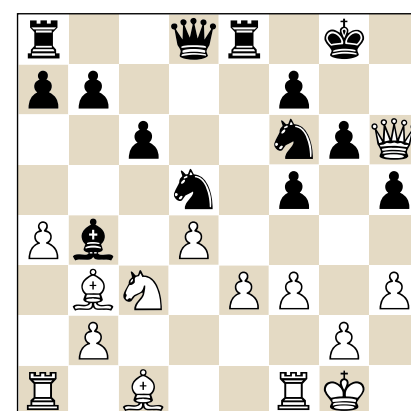
Bogoljubow-Petrovs

Bad Harzburg 1938

1.d4 d5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.c4 c6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.e3 e6 7.♗xc4 ♗b4 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗h4



9...♗bd7!? As you will have expected by now, the bishop did not yield. This retort by the talented Latvian seems to have been a novelty at the time. **10.♗xf5 10.f3** received an exclamation mark from Botvinnik, who did not spend any words on the capture on f5 in his notes to the 12th match game against Smyslov in 1954. Perhaps he thought Black's subsequent central control too obvious to mention. And indeed, Botvinnik's patient move, upon which Smyslov withdrew the bishop to g6 after all, is today's principal continuation. **10...exf5 11.♗f3 g6 12.h3 h5** Because White's usual plan of pushing e3-e4 is hardly possible, the c1-bishop remains inactive for now. Also, Bogoljubow's next move seems pretty naïve. **13.♗f4 ♗b6 14.♗b3 ♗bd5 15.♗h6 ♖e8 16.f3**



16...♗f8 As Petrovs himself indicated, Black could have struck at once with **16...♗g4! 17.fxg4 ♗f8**, although he soon had a winning position after **17.♗g5 ♗g7 18.♗d2 ♗b6 19.♗c4 ♗h7 20.♗h4 ♗xe3 21.♗xe3 ♖xe3**

And even though Black did not bring home the full point, it is clear that strategic ideas of yesterday can still be applied today and can teach us a lot about the dynamics of our game. ■



Recipes to make your Elo soar

It also matters when you read a book, **MATTHEW SADLER** found out, when he picked up Boris Gelfand's *Dynamic Decision Making in Chess* for the second time.

The first book to review this issue is the second volume of Boris Gelfand's series with Quality Chess, this time entitled *Dynamic Decision Making in Chess*.

This title could be interpreted in many ways so it's handy to dip into Gelfand's introduction to explain the purpose of the book:

'Chess is all about time. Each player makes a move, choosing to move only one piece, hoping that all his pieces will be in time to reach the necessary squares. If you are late, the opponent will checkmate you, queen his pawn, take your knight, skewer your rook or maybe just run away with half the kingdom and all three princesses.'

'This book is about dynamics. The things that easily fall victim to time, have an unstable foundation and erode quickly.'

'This is not an academic textbook about dynamics; it is a deeply personal book, with dynamics as the cen-

tral theme. Other recurring themes I shall discuss include the influence of engines on modern chess, and the clash between the millennials and my generation, both in chess style and in the public imagination. But if I think one of my experiences or opinions will interest the reader, then I shall mention it, even if it's "off-topic". If you can survive these digressions, you will be less shocked later in the book when a recipe for strawberry jam appears...'

I read through the book in one go over a period of 3-4 days and it left me with a strangely dissatisfied feeling. With Gelfand's marvellous first volume – *Positional Decision Making in Chess*, I felt after my first read-through that I had already added many wonderful nuggets of chess understanding to my repertory. In particular, the annotations to Gelfand's game against Campora (mentioned in my review in *New In Chess* 2015/6) are still fresh in my mind many months after reading the book. In the case of *Dynamic Decision Making in Chess*, I had seen lots of interesting chess, but I was very unsure what I should have understood from reading it: there wasn't a specific position that had stuck in my head with a 'Eureka' lightbulb next to it and the feeling that I had seen deeper in the eternal mysteries of chess!

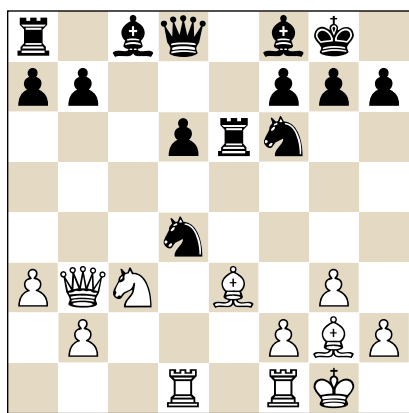
I picked up the book a second time before writing this review and the book felt much better, much more relevant. The difference I think was that the first time I read through the

book, I hadn't played chess for a few months, whereas the second time I was coming off the back of a weekend tournament in the UK. Many of the feelings and doubts I experienced while taking decisions in that tournament (albeit at a much lower technical level of course) were reflected in Gelfand's annotations. From the ivory tower of your study, such emotions and fears often seem very remote; you need to be knee-deep in the mud yourself to grasp how it truly feels! Once I viewed the book in that light, I understood and appreciated it much better. This is a book about doubt, about guessing at decisions, about calculating and seeing a lot but still missing things and how that all works out in practical games at the highest level. I still don't see it as an easy book to just pick up and learn something concrete from, but it could be a very valuable training tool for some introspection and thought about your own decision-making process in complicated positions.

I'd like to present an example that struck a chord with me:

Boris Gelfand
Sergey Tiviakov
Spain 2006

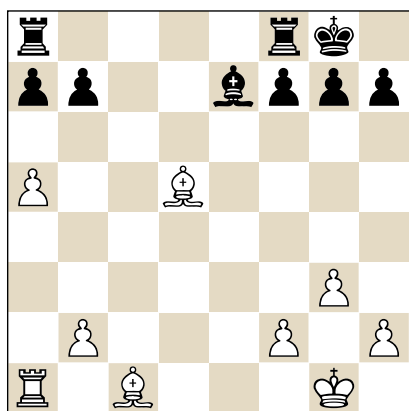
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.e3 c5 5.♘ge2 cxd4 6.exd4 0-0
7.a3 ♙e7 8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 ♖e8
10.d6 ♙f8 11.g3 ♖e6 12.♙f4
♘h5 13.♙e3 ♖xd6 14.♙b3 ♘c6
15.♙g2 ♘f6 16.0-0 ♖e6 17.♖ad1
d6 18.♘d4 ♘xd4



Here Gelfand explains why he chose 19. ♖xd4 instead of 19. ♗xd4. It's a beautiful (human) mixture of partial calculation, reasoning and personal chess experience.

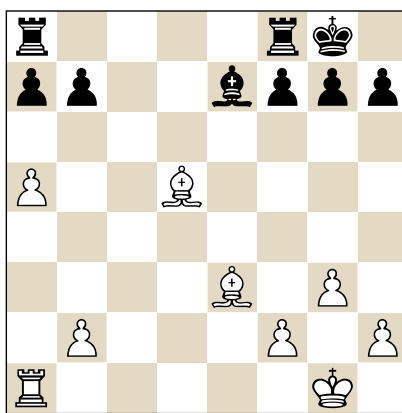
'During the game I also thought that 19. ♗xd4 was interesting but I was dissuaded by something. I remember noticing that 19... ♗b8 was possible, as White does not win a pawn with 20. ♗a4 a6 21. ♗xa6?, on account of 21... ♗xe3! 22. fxe3 ♕e6 and Black wins a piece. I did not want to allow Black to play ... ♗b8 and untangle his position. In short, it makes no sense to take with the rook when I can take with the bishop.

'Let's have a quick sidestep here. Alex (Alexander Khuzman, Gelfand's longtime second – ed.) likes to talk about "Vaisser's bishops", referring to a game he played three decades ago. It had a lasting effect on his chess understanding and as I have worked with him for twenty-five years, some of it has rubbed off on me.



Anatoli Vaisser - Alexander Khuzman
Soviet Union 1986

'Here Vaisser played... **23. ♕e3**
'... achieving the 'Vaisser bishops'!



'When I talk about my feeling for a position, it is important to understand that it is always based on 40 years of continuous study of chess games, and the conclusions I drew from chess games. Others will see

see at the board?' As Gelfand shows here, many grandmaster decisions are made using a completely different type of knowledge or insight. At the end of the day, Michael Adams' answer – 'as little as I can possi-

'From the ivory tower of your study, such emotions and fears often seem very remote; you need to be knee-deep in the mud yourself to grasp how it truly feels!'

things differently, but not necessarily worse or better!

'Anyway, it is easy to explain why I felt optimistic at this point: I had 'Vaisser's bishops', squeezing Black hard down the two diagonals, but I had not given up the exchange!

19. ♕xd4 ♖e8 20. ♗d5 ♗c7 21. ♗c1 ♗xd5 22. ♕xd5 ♗e7 23. ♗fe1 ♗xe1+ 24. ♗xe1 ♗c7 25. ♗e8 ♕h3 26. ♕xf7+ ♗h8 27. ♗e1 b6 28. ♗f3 ♗c8 29. g4 ♗d7 30. ♕h5 ♗e7 31. ♕c3 ♗h4 32. ♗e3 1-0.'

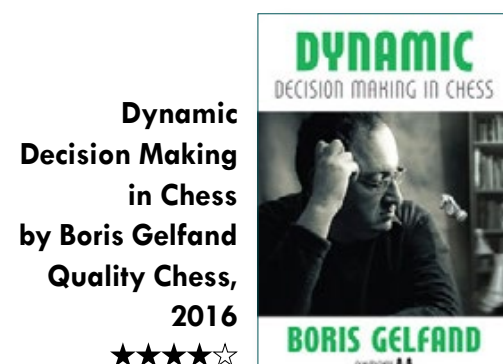
This is a great explanation! To make a choice between two plausible continuations – 19. ♗xd4 and 19. ♕xd4 – Boris did some non-exhaustive calculation (he focussed on one trick, but didn't calculate the line out) and then made a choice based on an evocative image from his own chess experience (the 'Vaisser bishops').

It made me think again how complicated it is to answer the question 'how much / how far ahead do you

bly manage' – still appeals to me the most!

I could quote a few more examples (for example, Gelfand's 17-page annotation of his game against Grischuk from Kazan 2011 contained many instructive practical moments) but I'm not allowed to fill the whole magazine! In conclusion, this is a book that speaks to your practical soul. As Gelfand states in his annotations to another game against Grischuk from Kazan 2011: 'I want to explain the thinking that has led to my reasonable success as a chess player, and not "cheat" in the process. It is quite easy to analyse a variation with the engine and then explain why it works. And this certainly has its uses, but to me it's more interesting to talk about how we find moves in the first place. This is the key to playing better chess.'

From that viewpoint, it's an invaluable opportunity to compare your thinking process to the way a top grandmaster takes difficult deci-



sions. And let's not forget the last chapter, which contains three recipes by Gelfand's wife, Maya (taken from her book *How to feed a champion*). Strangely enough, her recipe for strawberry jam is the same as the one my mother has used for years! I thought it would therefore be appropriate to end this review with my Mum's recipe for Orange, Cointreau and Brandy ice-cream. It hasn't produced as strong a champion as Maya's recipes, but still a very happy one!

Anne-Marie Sadler's Orange, Cointreau and Brandy ice-cream

Ingredients:

284 ml carton of double cream

370 g jar of good quality orange marmalade

Juice of 1 or 2 lemons

3 tablespoonfuls of Cointreau

3 tablespoonfuls of Brandy

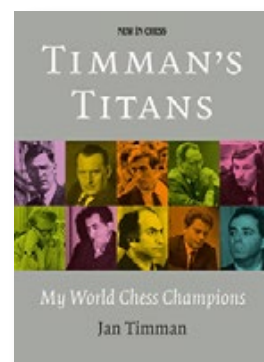
Instructions:

Whip the cream until it holds its shape. In a separate bowl mix the marmalade, the lemon juice, the Cointreau and Brandy. Fold the cream into the mix. Put in a plastic container and freeze for at least 8 hours. And just watch your Elo soar ;-)

Timman's Titans, by Jan Timman of course, is a reflection on the great players of the past 80 years, illustrated with anecdotes, personal memories and annotated games and game fragments, many of which played between Jan and the greats he examines. I could write much about it, but let me simply say that it's a joy to read! The game annotations are not overly burdened with variations, but there are very many original insights (tactical and positional) and many little-known games.

For example, Timman describes how in 1998, he received the scores of Botvinnik's secret training matches against strong opponents (such as Averbakh, Ragozin, Kan and Furman) from Hanon Russell (who had bought them from Igor Botvinnik, Mikhail's

Timman's Titans
by Jan Timman
New In Chess, 2016
★★★★☆



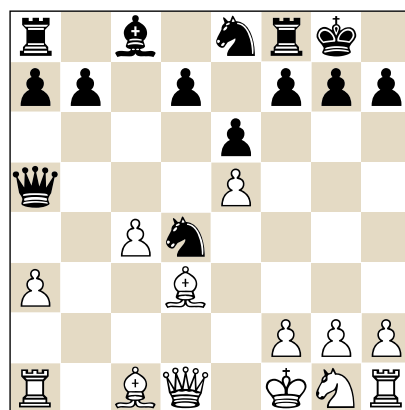
nephew). In total Timman annotated twelve games which were eventually published by Harding Simpole as *Botvinnik's Secret Games* in 2006. As Timman bemoans, 'This book too has led a secret life so far'. I guess he may soon have an extra buyer ☺. In his new book, Timman corrects a few omissions and (small) errors in that book, and he also presents an additional game that was missed. It's a fantastic exhibition of Botvinnik power!

Mikhail Botvinnik

Yury Averbakh

Moscow training game 1956

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♙d3 c5 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘c6 8.e4 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘xd4 10.e5 ♙a5+ 11.♙f1 ♘e8



12. ♙b2

12. ♙d2 ♙d8 (12... ♙c7 13. ♙b4 ♘c6 is better according to Timman, and this is also Stockfish's preference) 13. ♙b4 d6 14. ♙xh7+ ♙xh7 15. ♙xd4 was Szabo-Smyslov, Moscow 1956 (played just after this game), which the computer likes for White.

12... ♘c6 13. ♘f3 f5

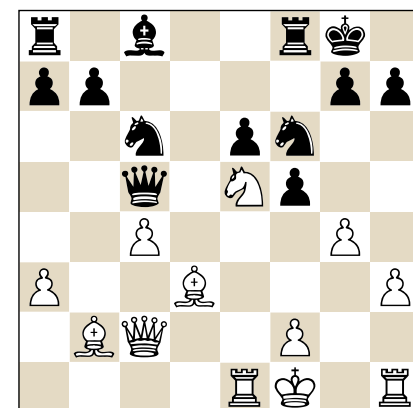
Timman prefers 13...d6 here, which hasn't yet been played. The drawback to 13...f5, as Timman points out, is that

'Black will not be able to avoid pushing his d-pawn and then the white queen's bishop will get a beautiful diagonal.'

14. ♙c2 d6 15. ♙e1 dxe5 16. ♘xe5 ♘f6 17.h3

'To prepare the thematic advance g2-g4', as Timman points out.

17... ♙c5 18.g4



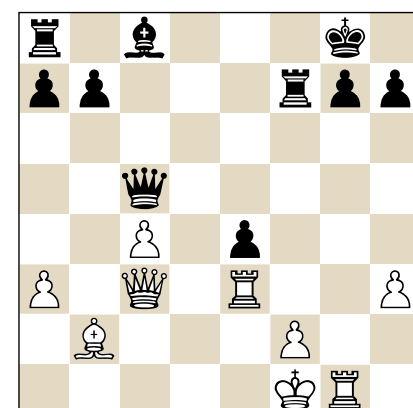
'Black is under heavy pressure', according to Timman. 'He cannot prevent White's opening of the g-file at any moment he likes to add force to his attack.'

18... ♘e4 19. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 20. ♙g1 'Bringing his last piece into an attacking position.'

20... ♙f7 21. ♙e3 ♙c5

'The only move was 21... ♙f8 after which there is no direct decision.'

22.gxf5 exf5 23. ♙xe4 fxe4 24. ♙c3



'Black resigns, because after 24... ♙f8 25. ♙eg3, he can no longer defend his g-pawn, while 25... ♙xf2+ 26. ♙e1 is no help.'

Gelfand wrote in his annotations to his game against Bocharov that 'opposite-coloured bishops favour the stronger player, something I have

only discovered recently'. The final position of this game is as good an example as any of this!

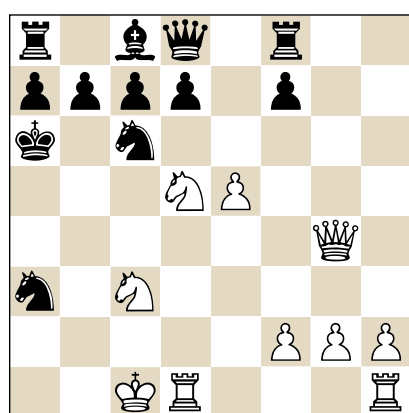
The next book, *Fundamental Checkmates*, is a page-turner! The Spanish trainer and teacher Antonio Gude has put together an excellent 'textbook of checkmate', as publisher Gambit describes the book dealing in nearly 400 pages with a dazzling array of mating patterns. Pleasingly, he makes use of many lesser-known games to illustrate his themes, which helps keep you fresh and keen throughout the book!

The book's 27 chapters are divided into 4 sections:

- First Steps, which treats the most basic mating patterns
- Mating Combinations using 2 pieces (e.g. Queen and Rook or Bishop and Knight)
- The King in the centre, either on the 1st, 2nd or 3rd ranks
- The castled King (divided into the type of material sacrificed to attack the King, e.g. Rook or Bishop)

There are also hundreds of exercises after each of the last three sections, to test your retention of the material.

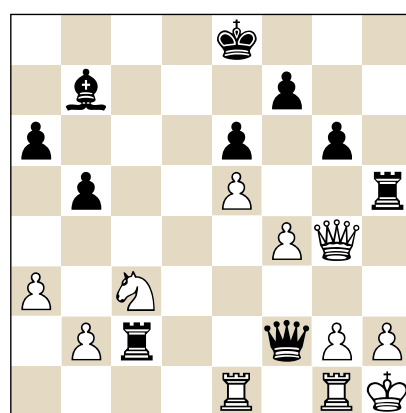
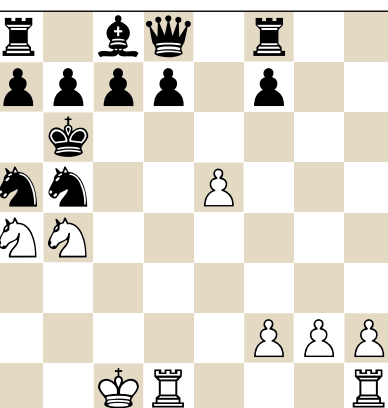
As you can imagine, I'm not short of examples to delight you with. I'll just give you a couple that had me aaah-ing and ooh-ing when I saw them!



Zaitsev-Skotorenko
USSR 1970

Was this a real game? Who cares! The finish is wonderful!

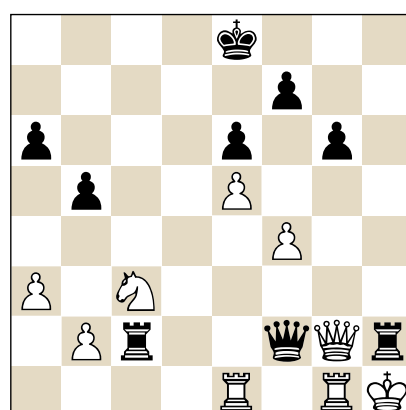
1. ♖a4+ ♜a5 2. ♖b5+ ♜xb5 3. ♜b4+ ♜b6 4. ♜a4 Mate.



Lame-E. Rubinstein
Krakow 1934

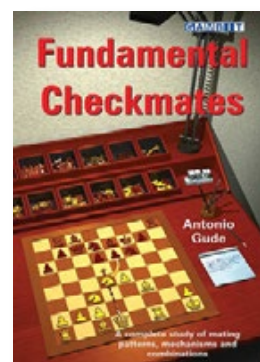
I wasn't surprised that Black had something decisive here, but I was surprised how!

1... ♟xg2+ 2. ♖xg2 ♜xh2+



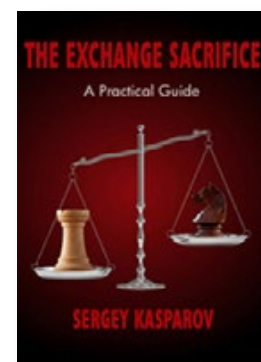
3. ♜xh2 ♜h4 Mate.

Definitely recommended!



Fundamental Checkmates
by Antonio Gude
Gambit, 2016
★★★★☆

The Exchange Sacrifice
by Sergey Kasparov
Russell Enterprises,
2016
★★★★☆



There's maybe just enough space to end with a quick discussion of Sergey Kasparov's *The Exchange Sacrifice* (Russell Enterprises). It's an interesting concept to gather together nearly 200 examples of exchange sacrifices, divided into two parts. Part I deals with exchange sacrifices in the games of Petrosian and Karpov, while Part II defines common themes in exchange sacrifices, such as 'Domination' or 'Fighting for the initiative'. It's a good

'To me it's more interesting to talk about how we find moves in the first place. This is the key to playing better chess.'

idea, and I think that Sergey Kasparov deserves a lot of praise for the effort he has made to gather and categorise all these games.

I did feel, however, that his analysis of many of the exchange sacrifices was a little sketchy. There were quite a few examples in the book in which the choice to sacrifice the exchange was either not correct (or at least open to debate) or a matter of style. At such moments, I would have appreciated more discussion and detail. When you read the book in one go, it's easy to feel a little confused and wonder what sort of conclusions and ideas you should be taking away. However, the book is a helpful starting point for further investigations. ■



Jan Timman

Experience prevails

Two matches with four war-horses proved to be a guarantee for exciting chess.

JAN TIMMAN takes a closer look at the highlights and the dispute that erupted in Hoogeveen on the final day.

Last year, the continued existence of the annual Hoogeveen tournament seemed in doubt, but this year, new sponsoring sources were tapped to safeguard the budget and even beef it up. This enabled tournament director Loek van Wely to organise two interesting matches: Nigel Short against Hou Yifan and Ivan Sokolov against Jorden van Foreest; four interesting players guaranteed not to have a single boring round. Internationally most of the attention went to the former match. In this magazine, Short has gone to great lengths to prove that women are lagging behind in chess because their brains are different from those of men. He gave an example: whenever he is a passenger in their car with his wife driving, as soon as they are in the parking garage, she will hand the car keys to him; parking is his area of expertise. That may be so, I thought, but at least Short's wife has a driving license, which is more than you can say about many famous chess players

(Euwe, Botvinnik, Tal, Fischer and Kasparov, to mention but a few).

So Hou Yifan would have to uphold female honour and dignity. She didn't find it easy. In the first five games, her play was rather timid, but this may have been due to other things. Her situation within women's chess is an uneasy one. Very much against her wishes, FIDE stick to their wish to hold the Women's World Championship in a knock-out format, and Hou Yifan is rightly loath to participate, because she is head and shoulders above the rest. FIDE's policy in this regard is thoughtless. Hou Yifan is a standard bearer for women's chess, just as Judit Polgar used to be. They should be happy that Hou Yifan, unlike Judit, is prepared to compete in women's events at all.

Short was in good form in Hoogeveen, playing subtly and positionally. After converting a slight advantage in Game 3 he struck again in Game 4.

Hou Yifan

Nigel Short

Hoogeveen 2016 (4)

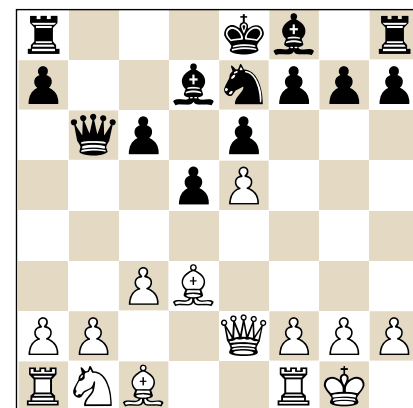
French Defence, Advance Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖d7 5.♗f3 ♚b6 6.♙d3 6.a3 probably offers better chances of an opening advantage.

6...cxd4 7.♗xd4

I have played this move myself. It yields White pleasant play, but otherwise it's nothing special.

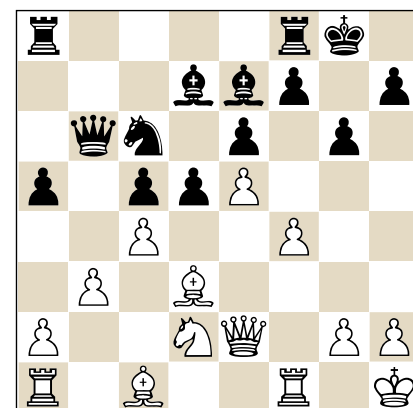
7...♗c6 8.♗xc6 bxc6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♚e2



10...a5 In Timman-De Jong, Amsterdam 2004, Black played 10...♗g6, after which White got an advantage with 11.♗h1, followed by the advance of the f-pawn. Short's move is better: he wants to transfer his knight to c6.

11.♗d2 c5 12.c4 Not the best plan. White wants to advance the f-pawn, but that's not an effective plan in this situation. With 12.♗f3, White could have gone for an advantage.

12...♗c6 13.f4 g6 14.♗h1 ♙e7 15.b3 0-0 Obvious enough, but now White gets a chance to justify her play. Strong was 15...a4, intending to force a positional concession.

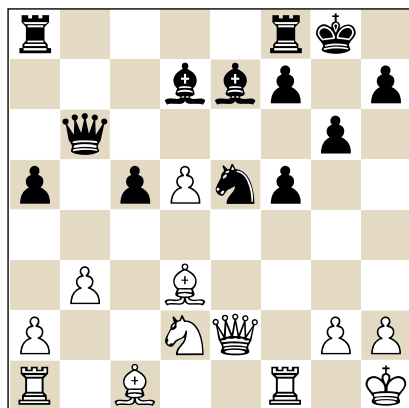


16.f5! Hou Yifan won't let such a chance slip.

16...exf5 The start of complications that required sharp calculation.

The alternative was 16...♘d4 17.♙f2 ♘xf5. The computer assesses the position after 18.♙xf5 gxf5 19.♘f3 ♙h8 as equal, but I think most humans would still prefer to be White.

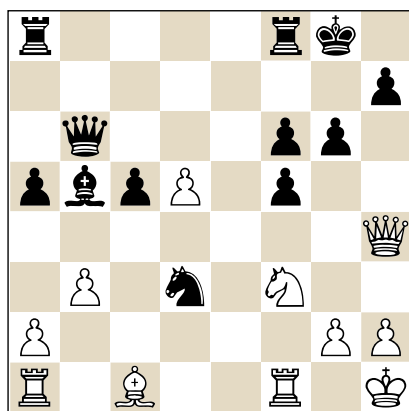
17.cxd5 ♘xe5! The point of the previous move.



18.♘f3? An awful mistake. Good was 18.♘c4 ♘xc4 19.♙xe7, when Black has to go for an endgame with 19...♙d6. After 20.♙xd6 ♘xd6 21.♙f4 ♘e4 22.♙ac1 the chances are roughly equal.

18...♘xd3 Of course. Black remains a solid pawn up in a superior position. Any attacking chances for White are just an illusion.

19.♙xe7 ♙b5 20.♙h4 f6



21.♙d2 Slightly more tenacious was 21.♘d2, intending to take the knight to c4.

21...♙ad8 22.♙c3 ♙xd5 23.♙h6 ♙c7 24.a4 ♙a6 25.♙e3 ♙d7 26.♙xa5 ♙e8 27.♙g1 ♙e2 28.♙c3 ♙d6 29.h3 ♙c2 30.♙a5 ♙b7 31.♙h2 f4 32.♙g1 ♘e5 33.♘e1 ♙xg2 34.♘g2 ♙xh3+ 35.♙h2 ♙xg2+ 36.♙g1 ♙xf1 0-1.



LENNART OOTES

Nigel Short was in good form and defeated Hou Yifan with one game to go. The last game, a fine victory by the Women's World Champion, caused a controversy as Short insisted that the FIDE rule should be applied that says that games don't count for the players' ratings once a match has been decided.

The match came to an unworthy conclusion. On the eve of the final round, someone drew Short's attention to the following FIDE rule: 'Where a match is over a specific amount of games, those played after one player has won, shall not

equally uninterested and counted everything.

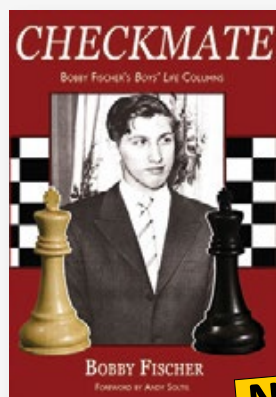
So no one checked whether the rule was followed, maybe because it is pretty pointless. Unlike qualification matches, in friendly matches players normally go all-out in all the games. Short thought it would be hard to motivate himself for the final game with the pressure off. That's not much of an argument. Hoogeveen gives you a free day halfway your match, so it cannot really be so difficult to charge yourself for each game, if only to please the organisers. On *chess.com*, Ignatius Leong made an attempt to justify the rule, arguing that the loser of a match might lose even more games on purpose. This is utter nonsense. Elo fraud can be perpetrated in any format, and if the perpetrators want to do it in a match, they can just increase the number of games as they see fit.

Van Wely would have been better advised to agree at once, because Short was formally right. But that would have entailed the unpleasant task of telling Hou Yifan over breakfast that she wouldn't be able to do something in return with White. No one would be happy to have to do this.

'FIDE should be happy that Hou Yifan, unlike Judit, is prepared to compete in women's events at all.'

be rated'. Armed with this knowledge, Short sent Van Wely an email for confirmation that the final game would not be counted for the rating. It didn't make the tournament director a happy man. He knew the rule, but two years ago, the matches Giri-Shirov and Jobava against me in Hoogeveen had also been decided after five games. No one was interested in the rule, and in the rating report the tournament director sent to FIDE, all last-round games were included. FIDE itself appeared to be

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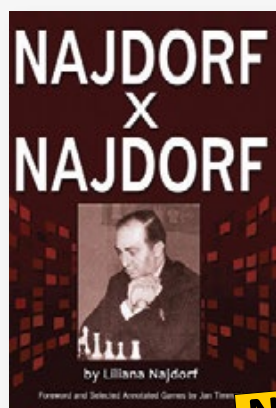


NEW!

Checkmate
Bobby Fischer's Boys' Life Columns
by Bobby Fischer

From December 1966 until January 1970, Bobby Fischer wrote a chess column for *Boys' Life*, the official magazine of the Boy Scouts of America. Now, for the first time, all of these columns have been collected in one volume. It is an eclectic mix, a fascinating look into Fischer's mind as he reached his prime, maturing into the strongest player in the world. With tips for players, comments on playing, annotated games and casual observations.

paperback 128 pages | €17.95



NEW!

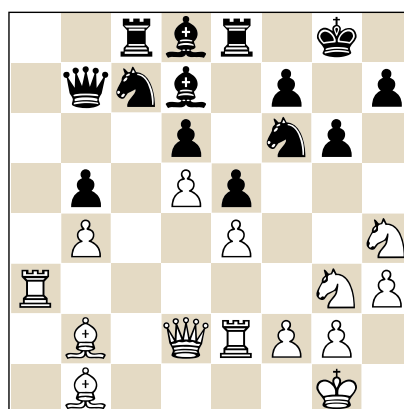
Najdorf X Najdorf
A Chess Biography
by Liliana Najdorf

Miguel Najdorf's daughter Liliana paints an intimate portrait of her larger-than life father. She shows us Najdorf as a man both greatly talented and deeply flawed: a genius who could conduct 40 blindfold games simultaneously and memorize long strings of random numbers, yet forgot where he parked his car. Jan Timman has prepared a selection of annotated games and an in-depth foreword.

paperback 208 pages | €24.95

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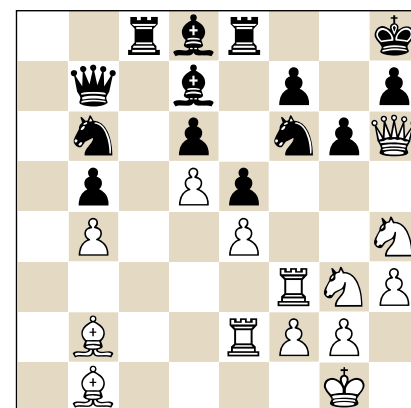
Van Wely allowed himself to be sucked into a nocturnal e-mail exchange with Short, which eventually led to nothing. The next morning, the arbiters had a meeting, in which they took a 'Dutch decision', which means that they put it off. During the game, Short went up to an arbiter to ask him what the situation was. It was not a pleasant conversation. According to Short, he was told at one point: 'You could be called a chicken'. I think the arbiter expressed himself inaccurately in English and had meant to say something like 'It could be interpreted as cowardice', which, incidentally, would have been true. But it was surely a painful remark for Short, who must have realised at that point that he would have been better off just preparing for the game. As it happened, Hou Yifan was in her element for the first time, and when Short neglected his defence, she struck mercilessly.



Hou Yifan – Nigel Short
Hoogeveen 2016 (6)
position after 26. Ra3

Short had gone for the Closed Ruy Lopez instead of the French. Up to here he had defended well, and after 26... Qh8, followed by 27... Qg8, the position would have been equal. 26... Qa8 27. Rf3 Qb6 Risky, but it just about works. 28. Qh6! Of course. White increases the pressure. 28... Qh8 Now it's too late. The only defence was 28... Qe7. After 29. Qhf5 Qxf5

30. Qxf5 Qf8 White is better, but the black defensive line remains intact.



29. Rxf6! Very elegant. 29... Qxf6 30. Qh5! The point. The white attack is decisive. 30... gxh5 31. Qxf6+ Qg8 32. Re3 Qg4 33. Qg5+ Qh8 34. hxg4 Qe7 35. Qxh5 Qa4 36. Th3 Qf6 37. Tf3 Qg7 38. Rxf7 Qg8 39. Qf5 1-0.

The rating controversy hadn't run its course yet. Van Wely muscled into the discussion on *chess.com*, arguing that the final game should count, and attacking Short personally in passing – again not a very wise thing to do for a tournament director, but Van Wely just isn't a man to mince words. Short was furious when it turned out that the final game had been included in the arbiter's rating report to FIDE after all. He called the Hoogeveen organisation 'disgraceful' and even 'dishonest'. He also coined the term 'Hoogeveengate'. And all for a few rating points. Surprisingly enough, the Rating Commission in the end decided not to count the game. Short was happy. 'Glad to see part of FIDE is working well', he twittered. I do not agree with him. It is a definite shame that FIDE only applies its rules when there has been some to-do about it. They would be better off scrapping that rule as soon as possible.

Hoogeveen 2016

				1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
Nigel Short	2670	IGM	ENG	½	½	1	1	½	0	3½	2705
Hou Yifan	2647	IGM	CHI	½	½	0	0	½	1	2½	2612



LENNART OOTES

Dutch Champion Jorden van Foreest beat Ivan Sokolov twice with the white pieces, but his choice of the King's Indian led to three defeats with Black.

I had looked forward to the match between Sokolov and Van Foreest with great interest, expecting a battle between two war-horses, each with his own dynamics. It certainly lived up to my expectations. Two months earlier, 17-year-old Van Foreest had convincingly won the Dutch championship, and he is now poised on the brink of an international breakthrough. Yet I regarded Sokolov as the favourite. Van Foreest has an excellent sense for complications and knows how to grab the initiative, but strategically he still has a lot to learn. Sokolov has played little in the past few years because of his work as a chess coach in Dubai, but he is still an experienced old hand. I did worry a bit about his black repertoire against 1.e4, and that did turn out to be a problem. What I had not foreseen was that Van Foreest would also be extremely vulnerable as Black. In his match against me in Hooageveen last year, he invariably did well in the opening with Black. But he has recently adopted the King's Indian, and this opening makes great

demands on a player. Van Foreest was successful with it in the Dutch championship, and in his report in *Schaakmagazine*, the magazine of the Dutch Chess Federation, he observed that the opening suits him well. If I had been his coach, however, I would have advised him against playing it in Hooageveen. Sokolov is a 1.d4-player who loves to attack, and the King's Indian gives an attacking player all kinds of starting-points. No, against Sokolov, the Slav, Nimzo-Indian, or even the Grünfeld Indian would have been better choices.

Ivan Sokolov
Jorden van Foreest
 Hooageveen 2016 (3)
 King's Indian, Semi-Averbakh

1.c4 An unusual choice for Sokolov, but he is aiming for the same openings as after 1.d4.

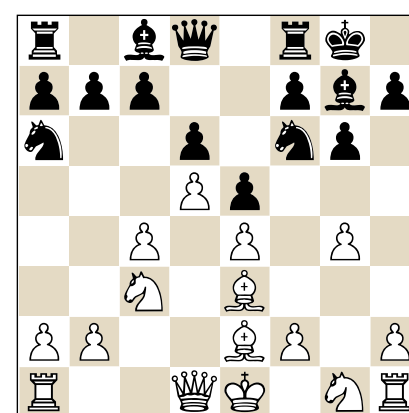
1...♖f6 2.♗c3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 ♘g7 5.♙e2 0-0 6.♙e3

Sokolov had prepared this system especially for this match.

6...e5 In Game 5, Van Foreest went for 6...♖c6, and after 7.d5 ♗e5 8.f4 ♗eg4 9.♙d2 he withdrew the knight with 9...♗h6, which looks strange but is probably not all bad. But he went wrong in the early middlegame and ended up losing hopelessly.

7.d5 ♗a6 In Game 1, Van Foreest had played 7...a5, which is a bit slow, but at the same time the most common move. Other alternatives are 7...♗bd7 and 7...c6, the most direct way to create counterplay.

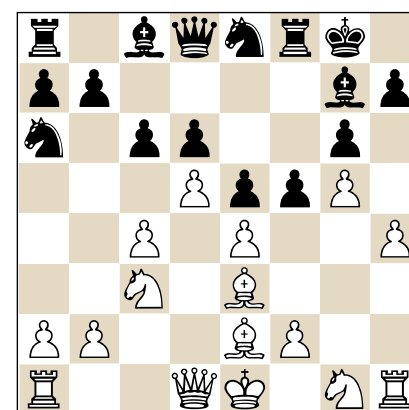
8.g4



This sharp system was thought up by Matthew Sadler, who used it successfully in the early 1990s. The situation is more dangerous for Black than in similar positions in the Sämisch Variation, since Black cannot play ...h7-h5.

8...c6 A mix of two systems. Black usually plays his knight to c5 in order to force White to cover his e-pawn.

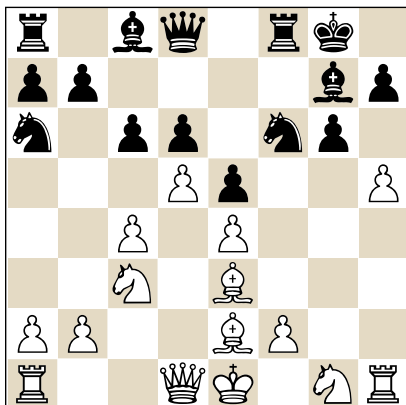
9.g5 ♗e8 10.h4 f5



This advance is known from a game Sadler-Bouaziz, Ostend 1991, with the difference that there Black had first exchanged on d5. Sadler reacted by developing his knight to f3, which guaranteed him a slight edge.

11.gxf6 The sharpest reaction.

11...♘xf6 12.h5

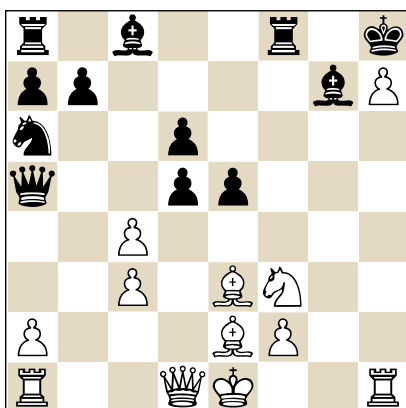


12...♔a5

Van Foreest played all this quite fast, but it is not good. Black should have swapped on d5 before coming out with his queen. After 12...cxd5 13.cxd5, ♔a5 Black would probably have just enough counterplay, e.g. 14.hxg6 ♘xe4 15.gxh7+ ♔h8 16.♘f3 ♙f5 17.♙f1 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♘c5, and White is unable to reinforce his attack: Black is excellently set up strategically. But it is asking for trouble to take up such a position against an out-and-out attacker like Sokolov.

13.hxg6 ♘xe4 14.gxh7+ ♔h8 15.♘f3 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 cxd5

Too late. Better was 16...♙f5, although even then White will be better after 17.♙f1! ♔xc3 18.♖c1 ♔a3 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.♘h4.

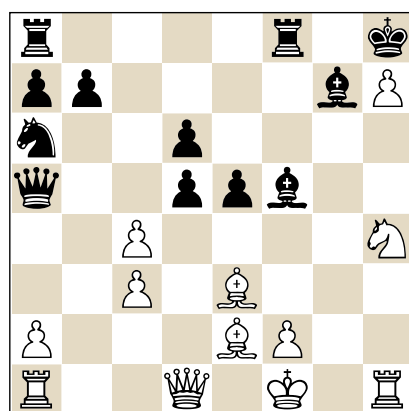


17.♙f1! This is the difference. White does not have to recapture on d5.

17...♙f5 18.♘h4



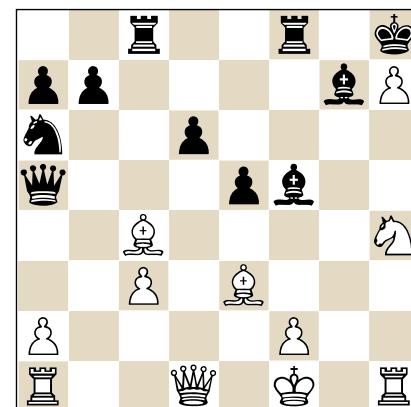
Each of them with their own thoughts at the prize-giving: Ivan Sokolov, Jorden van Foreest, Nigel Short (with a spare head by artist Yvon Drummen), Hou Yifan and tournament director Loek van Wely.



18...dxc4 For the first time, Van Foreest started thinking, but it is already too late. The text loses at once, but even after 18...♔xc3 19.♖c1 ♔a3 20.♔xd5 ♖f6 21.♙g5 ♖af8 22.♖cd1

or 18...♘c7 19.♖c1 ♖ae8 20.♙d3! e4 21.♙e2 ♖f6 22.♙d4, White would have a decisive attack.

19.♙xc4 ♖ac8



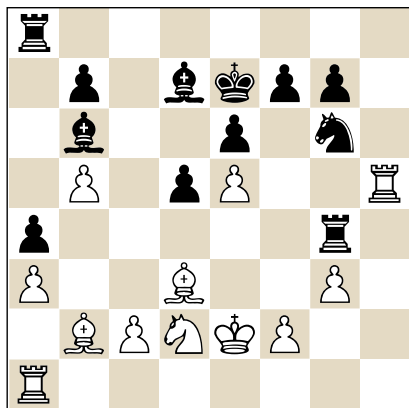
20.♙e6 It's a free-for-all for White. The text is a hammer blow, but 20.♘xf5 would also have won easily.

20...♙e4 21.♔g4 ♙d3+ 22.♔g1 ♖ce8 23.♙f5 ♙xf5 24.♔xf5 ♖f6 25.♙g5 ♖fe6 26.♘g6+ ♖xg6 27.♔xg6 ♖f8 28.♙e7 ♖xf2 1-0.

Hoogeveen 2016

				1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
Ivan Sokolov	IGM	NED	2623	1	0	1	0	1	½	3½	2673
Jorden van Foreest	IGM	NED	2615	0	1	0	1	0	½	2½	2565

In Game 4, Van Foreest levelled the score again.



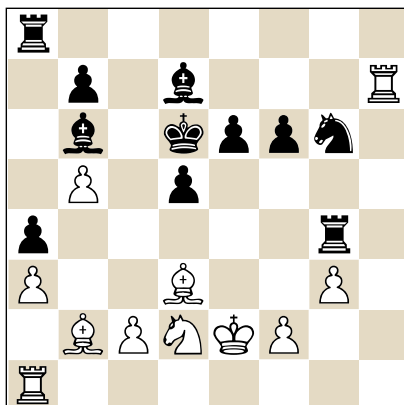
Jorden van Foreest – Ivan Sokolov
Hoogeveen 2016 (4)
position after 22. Rf5

This time, Sokolov had played the Caro-Kann for the first time in his life. He had survived the opening in reasonable shape, and the diagrammed position is dynamically balanced. White has just taken his rook to h5, depriving its black counterpart on g4 of virtually all squares. Black could have solved this in the following ingenious way: 22... Rf4! 23. f3 Rf5!, and he will have sufficient compensation for the exchange.

22...f5?

This shows that Sokolov has little experience with this type of position. There was no reason to upset the pawn structure. Now the position

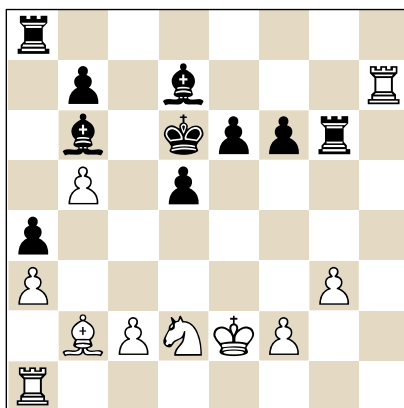
will be opened and the white pieces will cooperate optimally.
23. exf6+ gxf6 24. Rh7+ Kd6



25. Qxg6

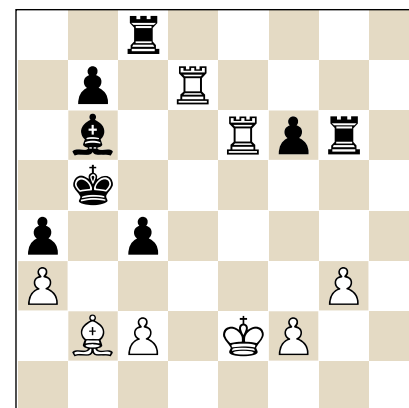
The computer finds 25. c4 even stronger, but Van Foreest chooses an elegant way to get a large advantage.

25...Rxf6



26. Qc4+! The point of the previous move. **26...dxc4 27. Rd1+ Ke5**

28. Rhxd7 Kxb5 29. R1d6 Rc8 30. Rxe6



30...c3

30... Rf6 would have given him better defensive chances.

31. Qc1 Rc7 32. Rd5+ Kc4 33. Rf5 Qd4 34. Re4 Rg8 35. Qe3 Rd7 36. Rxf6 b5 37. g4 b4 38. Qxd4 Kd5 1-0.

Sokolov won Game 5 again as White, creating a unique situation: all games had been won by White. No draws!

In the final game, Van Foreest failed to create chances. Sokolov went for a solid line of the Scotch, and when White took too many risks, he got an advantage and secured match victory by perpetual check. And thus, experience had prevailed over youthful élan in both matches. ■

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Richard Rapport

CURRENT ELO: 2730

DATE OF BIRTH: March 25, 1996

PLACE OF BIRTH: Szombathely, Hungary

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Belgrade, Serbia



What is your favourite city?

Rome.

What drink brings a smile to your face?

Grape juice.

Which book would you give to a dear friend?

When Nietzsche wept by Irvin D. Yalom.

What book is currently on your bedside table?

Azincourt by Bernard Cornwell.

What is your all-time favourite movie?

The Usual Suspects, directed by Brian Singer.

And your favourite TV series?

Suits, created by Aaron Korsh.

Do you have a favourite actor?

Kevin Spacey.

And a favourite actress?

Felicity Jones.

What music are you currently listening to?

That depends on my mood.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?

Not really.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?

Boris Vasilievich Spassky, because of his universal style.

What was your best result ever?

Entering the Top-20 of the world.

And the best game you played?

Perhaps Rapport-Lupulescu, 2015.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?

There are many, for example, Radjabov-Ivanchuk, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2011 (1-0).

What is your favourite square?

f7.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?

Languages.

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or?

Twitter.

How many friends do you have on Facebook?

Around 300.

Who do you follow on Twitter?

I am not active on social media, but my goal for the near future is to increase the number of people that I follow.

What is your life motto?

Unbowed, unbent, unbroken.

When were you happiest?

On my wedding day.

When was the last time you cried?

When my father-in-law passed away.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?

Thor.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?

Fall seven times, stand up eight.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?

Bobby Fischer, Muhammad Ali and Johnny Depp.

Is there something you'd love to learn?

To talk Serbian fluently.

Where is your favourite place in the world?

Home.

What is your greatest fear?

Losing my wife.

And your greatest regret?

Thankfully, nothing worth mentioning so far.

How do you relax?

Spending time in nature.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?

To have tournaments in more popular places, like recently the match in New York.

What does it mean to be a chess player?

To create constantly and enjoy the mixture of sport and art.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?

Yes.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?

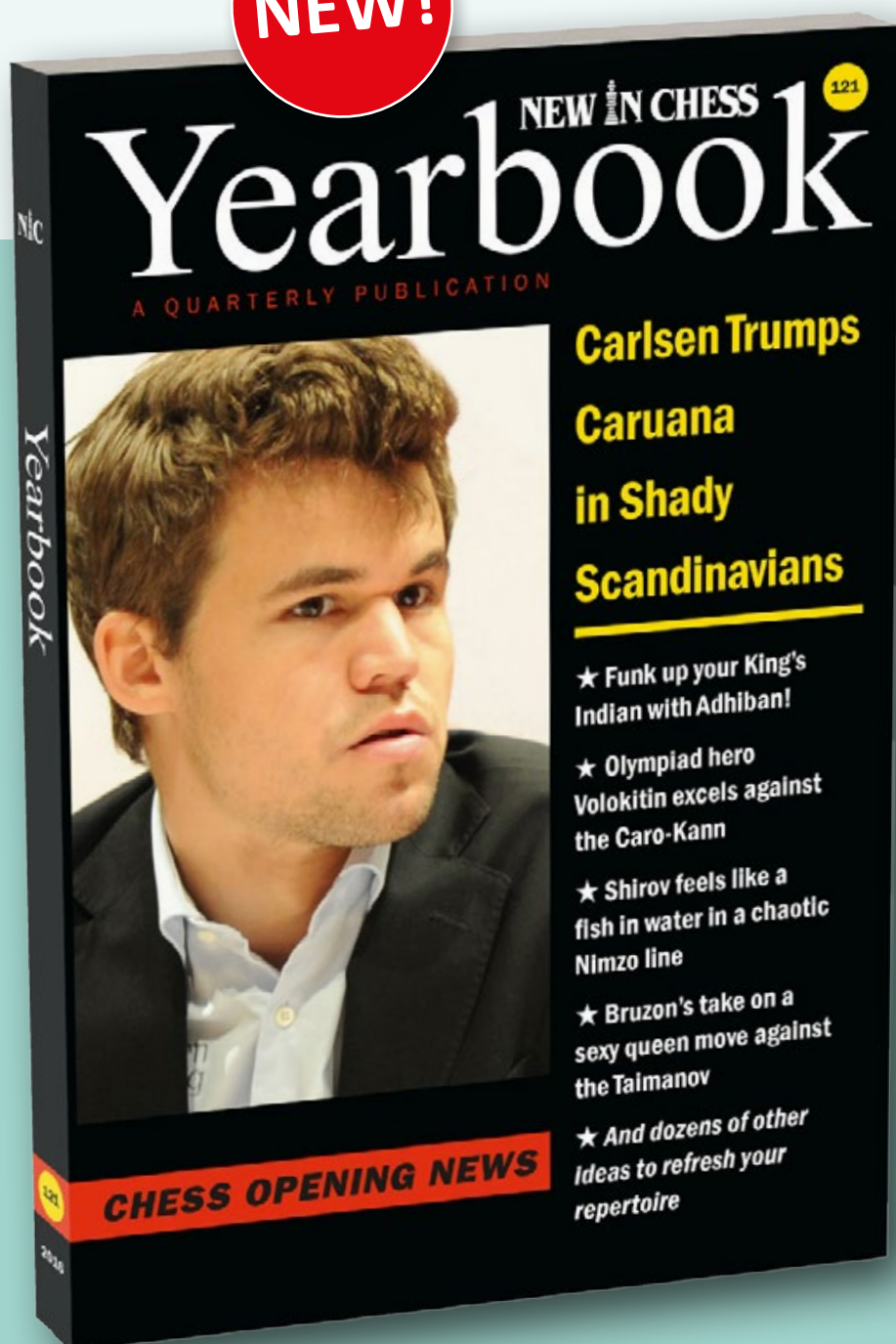
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- How did Wesley So give Nakamura a hard time in the Open Catalan with 7.♘e5?
- How come Black scores so well in the Kmochnimzo nowadays?
- Can Black equalize with 11...b6 in the main line Grünfeld with 7.♘c4 and 8.♘e2?
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